

The videogame magazine

December 1999
Issue 13



PlayStation Nintendo 64 Game Boy PC Dreamcast

READY 2 RUMBLE

Get punch drunk with Dreamcast's fist of fun.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

Blood! Guts! Gasoline!
It's a gangster's paradise.

JET FORCE GEMINI

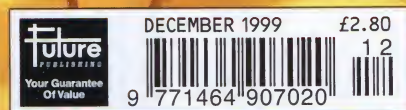
Tooled-up twins give the N64 a turbo boost.

Lara's teenage kicks

TOMB RAIDER 4

REVIEWED INSIDE

**PLUS! CONFESSIONS
OF A LARA FANATIC**



132
pages of

Quake II
Dino Crisis
Pokémon
Neo Geo Pocket
Shigeru Miyamoto
The Navy
Movies
Music & More!

PLAYSTATION 2 SPECIAL!

Sony's baby dragged kicking and screaming from the womb.

Have I been you somewhere before?



quantic dream

Featuring an original soundtrack by
David Bowie and Reeves Gabrels



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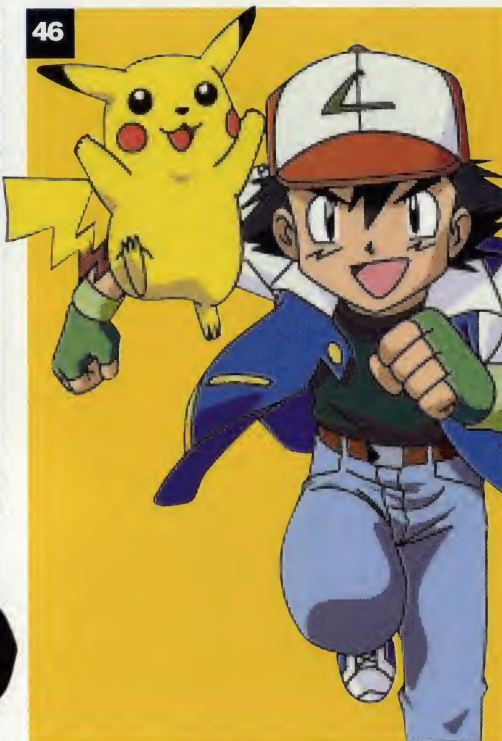
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59 NEW GAMES REVIEWED!

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68 New PlayStation Games

New releases: Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Quake II, Final Fantasy VIII, Mission: Impossible, Dino Crisis, Metal Gear Special Missions, Tony Hawk's Skateboarding, Spyro 2: Gateway to Glimmer, No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking, Demolition Racer, Madden NFL 2000, Pac Man World, Rainbow Six, Star Wars: The Phantom Menace

■ **Dino Crisis:** walking with dinosaurs



82 New PC Games

New releases: Grand Theft Auto 2, Driver, Homeworld, System Shock 2, Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear, Drakan, Prince of Persia 2, Freespace 2, Black Moon Chronicles, Championship Manager 2, Darkstone, Diablo, Grand Prix 2, Lego Racers, Mayday, Shattered Light, Simon The Sorcerer I & II, Starfleet Command, Traitor's Gate, Ultimate Soccer Manager '98

■ **GTA2:** Slapheads.

90 New N64 Games

New releases: Jet Force Gemini, Mickey's Magical Tetris Challenge, Mario Golf, Rayman 2

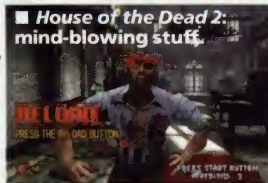
■ **Jet Force Gemini:** Blam.



96 New Dreamcast Games

New releases: Ready 2 Rumble, House of the Dead 2, UEFA Striker, Pen Pen, Monaco Grand Prix, Hydro Thunder, Speed Devils, Buggy Heat, Jimmy White's 2: Cueball, WWF Attitude, Mortal Kombat Gold, Dynamite Cop, Toy Commander

■ **House of the Dead 2:** mind-blowing stuff.



102 Other Games

Coin-op: Star Wars Pinball

Game Boy Color: Pokémon

Neo Geo Pocket Color: Metal Slug, Puzzle Bobble, Pocket Tennis, Neo Turf Masters, King of Fighters R-2, Neo Geo Cup '98 Plus

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The videogame magazine

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"My Beautiful Party"

*Free beer? Dreamcast games?
And as many nibbles as you can nibble?
It's just a shame you weren't invited...*



Dreamcast Launch Party, Commonwealth Institute, London


"It's my party," sang Barbara Gaskin, "and I'll cry if I want to." Not, of course, that you should ever sob at a do, unless you've been drinking gin for eight hours straight and just split up with your longstanding lover. However, if you work in the videogames "trade" and were lucky enough to hold an invite to the Sega Dreamcast launch party, breaking into tears would have come a poor third to cracking open the tinnies and hitting on the delectably drunk members of the opposite sex on show. The lights were dim, the music was loud and limb-loosening drink of all description flowed free. Oh, and Dreamcast pods offered the opportunity to complete the Twinkle Circuit in *Sonic Adventure* in record time, attracting booty aplenty. Yeah, sure...

Slot Check

- Place: Commonwealth Institute, Kensington, London
- Size: 6,000 square metres
- History: The Commonwealth Institute was previously a museum housing static displays representing the 54 Commonwealth countries. In April 1998 the Government withdrew funding, the displays were put into storage and the building became a venue for niche trade shows. The event that graced the institute immediately prior to the Sega knees-up was a grain seed show
- Entertainment: Free bar, DJs, multiple Dreamcast pods and outdoor – but surprisingly sweetly scented – toilets
- Price: [On the night] Free entry if you could blag a ticket [To hire venue] £4675 Mon-Fri, £6600 Sat-Sun
- Telephone: 0171 6034535
- Opening hours: All functions close at 1.30am
- Chances of a snog at Dreamcast party: 50:50

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON





**"The Dreamcast
TV campaign is going to
change the shape
of videogames advertising."**

Alison & Craig 29 & 29, Head of Marketing at Sega & "Friend"

[To Alison] Hello. Are you having a good night? "I think this is the most fantastic launch I've ever been to."
Hang on. You would say that. You're head of marketing for Sega, aren't you? "I'm responsible for all the promotion and PR and advertising and launching of the Sega Dreamcast."
Congratulations. So, you organised this party? "Well, yes. It's going incredibly well. There's a very good feeling around. A lot of hard work has gone into all this."
Erm, thanks for the invite, then. [Accidentally tipping pint over ground] Schwe're having a great time. "Thanks

for coming."
[Trying to get it together] No, no, thank you. How d'you think the Dreamcast is going to do? "I think it's going to do phenomenally well."
Are you going to buy one? "Already got one."
What's your favourite game? "Ready 2 Rumble. I like the characters."
What do you think about the mad Dreamcast TV adverts? "I like them very much. They are going to change the shape of videogames advertising."
Even though they're bonkers? "Cheerio, then."
You off? Bye.



"My Beautiful Party"

Mrs DJ On the decks

Hello. [Mrs DJ looks busy DJing]
Have you got any Britney Spears? No? How about S-Club

?? Melanie C? [Blanks Arcade]
Oh well. Keep up the good work. Thanks anyway. Bye.



Louise 27, PR, Ubi Soft

Hello. This place is massive. Been here before? "Yes, when I was a Girl Guide. I seem to remember learning all about Ghana and New Zealand, for some reason."
Ghana? Where's that? "Er, dunno. I couldn't believe it when the taxi pulled up. I recognised the flags at the front and suddenly I was back in 1981 wearing my Girl Guide kit. And, no, cheeky, I don't still wear it."
So which is best? The Sega Party or learning all about Ghana and New Zealand? "Um, well, I never thought I'd come back, but funnily enough – what with the beers – it'll have to be this."

What's it like being a PR girl, then? [Tittering] "Oooh, it's a lot of fun. I get to take a lot of people out for drinks and I get to have a lot of laughs."
So it's even better than being a Girl Guide? "Ab-sol-utely."
And what Dreamcast games is Ubi Soft doing? "Speed Devils and Monaco Grand Prix."
We're reviewing them this issue. That's handy. "Be nice, won't you? How about I get you a drink, then?"
What, one of those free ones? **All right, then. Pint of lager, please.** "Be right back..."



**"Sega has got its
arse in gear
and managed to get it right
with the Dreamcast"**



Orin, Jay & Ian 27, 28 & 29, Gatecrashers

What do you reckon of the Dreamcast, then? "The PlayStation's a great console, but we all know that it's coming to the end of its life. Sega has got its arse in gear and managed to get it right with the Dreamcast."
You don't think the Dreamcast is going to go the way of the Saturn? "The thing was, unlike with the Dreamcast, Sega didn't let any third parties get involved with the Saturn. Sega has got great arcades, so it thinks it can make great consoles all by itself. But it isn't about just trying to

bring the arcade into the home. In an arcade you are surrounded by a lot of atmosphere. A coin-op can throw you around and pump sound into your ears, but you can't do that with a console. Sega needs to ensure that it's providing a new type of experience... [gabbles on for a good 20 minutes] ...make sure it gets the balance right with the Dreamcast.

Good point, well made. Have you been drinking? "I'm a bit pissed, actually."

Never mind. Nice talking to you, mate. "Bye."



"My Beautiful Party"



"We have the biggest
Pick & Mix selection
in the whole country."

Katie

26, Assistant Product Manager, Woolworths



Hello. Are you having a nice time? [Downing drink] "Great, thanks." [Giggling] "Have you come over to chat me up, saucy?"
Well... sort of. [Racks brain for a guaranteed knicker-wetting chat-up line] Erm, so what do you think of the Dreamcast, then? "Well, the interesting thing is going to be this on-line gaming capability..."
[To ourselves]. "What do you

think of the Dreamcast...?"
What sort of chat-up line was that? Useless. [Unfazed] "... 'cos obviously the Dreamcast is the first console that lets you do this. It'll be interesting to see what happens when the PlayStation 2 comes out, you know, to see whether the Dreamcast is just plugging the gap."
What is Woolworths' stance on the Dreamcast, then? "We'll be launching in all of our stores, and stocking all the games. We've got more than 800 outlets, you know."
You know the Pick & Mix? How come you don't lose loads of money by people walking past and helping themselves? "I don't know. We have the biggest Pick & Mix selection in the country. It's a very profitable part of the shop."
Those lime ones with chocolate in the middle are the best. "Wanna dance?"
Um, yes! Be over in a second. Just going to chat to those two over there. See ya in a sec.
"Yo-kay. Don't be long."





Emily & Aleks 27 & 24, TV Presenters, *Bits*, Channel 4



Hang on. We know you. [Emily speaks] "Hi, there. Have you played *House of the Dead 2*? It's fantastic. Cigarette?"

[Accepting] Er, thanks. "The Dreamcast version is much better

than the arcade because it doesn't make your eyes go quite so funny. The screen's flickery and far too big in the arcade. It's a bit like when you go to the cinema and sit too close and it gives you a headache. It's not so good playing with the controllers instead of the guns, though. Another fag?"

Errr. All right, then. [Aleks starts screaming at TV] "Arrggghhhhh."

So, are you having a nice time? "Oh, yes. Where else can you play games, chat to people, drink beer

and – of course – smoke fags?"

Aren't you bored of playing games? You must have been doing it all week. "You know, I just love playing games." [Aleks starts shouting again]

Did you see the Arcade Boys vs Bits girls Games Night in the last issue? "You lied! We thrashed you and you never admitted to it, and that's because you boys don't like being beaten by girls. Come on. Play me at this. I'll pan you."

No problem. Back in a minute "Chicken..."



Your beautiful arcade

■ The time has come to call a halt to this shameless ligging and get out among honest, hardworking folk to better gauge the state of public gamesplaying action nationwide. The only way Arcade can do this is with your help, as you know all the button-pummelling hot-spots on your manor. Drop us a line and we'll crown you king of the cabinets for a day.

A Write to us

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Editorial

Busy, busy

Phew. [Sound of battered old suitcase being lifted onto table] They say there's no place like home. Home is, after all, where most of us get to play our favourite videogames. But the world is becoming an increasingly videogame-orientated one, which is why we've had an especially busy month scouring the globe for the hottest videogaming action.

The Tokyo Game Show in, er, Tokyo saw the greatest unveiling since Moses checked out with God and walked down from Mt Sinai to announce The Ten Commandments to the gathered masses. PlayStation2 is here, and we've seen it, touched it and played it. It should be with hands quaking with excitement that you turn to our full report on the new console on page 50.

There's a new *Tomb Raider* game in town too, and we've got the low-down on page 70. And so from Tokyo to, er, Plymouth where we catch up with the self-proclaimed Biggest Lara Croft Fan In The World Ever.

Elsewhere, we've joined up with the Navy for the day, put on our party trousers and toasted a beer to the launch of the Dreamcast, and made Shigeru Miyamoto – Mr Nintendo himself – a cup of tea.

It's been quite a month, as I said, and one I hope goes to show just how passionate we here at *Arcade* are about not just playing videogames, but living videogames too. I hope you agree.

Sean Atkins
Editor

It's your letters

Why bottle it all up when you can put pen to paper and share your problems with the world?

Letter of the month

Faceless gaming

I'm writing about the letter in *Arcade* 10 "Sofa so good". It argued that Internet play was never going to be as good as playing against a friend in the same room. Well, I'm sure the thousands of people who play their favourite games over the Net, like me, would disagree.

Anyone who has played *Half-Life*, *Team Fortress Classic* or *Quake II* deathmatches will tell you Internet gaming is great. The people who criticise it haven't tried it. Many PC owners don't ever try it. It was only a few months ago that my friend came into school one morning and couldn't stop talking about *TFC*. The next week I tapped into this previously unused potential of my PC and I've never looked back. I'm now in a clan and regularly play matches, enjoying the satisfaction of the whole 16-man team pulling off a great attack on the enemy base. Multi-player Net games are the future. Get with it.

Ben Nelson, Neston, South Wirral

Maybe... But does the Internet allow for game banter? Can you search your opponent's face for weakness? When you lose, can you punch them in that said face? No. In short, the Internet erects a massive barrier between you and your opponents/team mates and takes away a lot of the fun. True, the games that you mention are all superb but you might as well be playing against cleverly written AI for all you know.

Internet gaming: been there, done that. Get ready for the rewind: Mario Kart four-player on Wario Stadium wins out any day...

Soul weaver

A week ago I bought *Soul Reaver* and played it religiously. After a couple of days, I defeated Kain for the second time, but was less than thrilled to find a brief cut-scene and a "To be continued" was all that was waiting for me. Convinced I'd missed something I re-completed the game, but it did exactly the same.

I've read that a third of the levels were cut out to avoid further delays to the games production. Surely they'll turn up as a sequel. It'd be like paying £15 for *The Phantom Menace* on video and the tape ending just before the pod race begins.

I am now severely pissed at Eidos. By shipping half a game and promising

the rest of it in the form of a sequel, they can make twice as much money. I'm sure I'm not the only one of your readers who would like to know what the hell's going on.

David Armstrong, Brighton

The reports that you may have seen are largely based on an interview that was done about almost a year ago when the game was still deep in development. It was not done just to rush the product onto the shelves. Arcade contacted Eidos, who said: "The decision to split it into two games was actually made several months ago. It was not something we decided at the very last minute just to rush the product to the shelves. We realised a while back that we had essentially over-designed the game, and that the epic story we wanted to convey was too ambitious for a single product."

Apparently, the speculations that a third of the game was deleted are simply not true, the total deleted area is the equivalent of the Silenced Cathedral level, which would have amounted to about another 4-5 hours play if development had continued. But it appears that the levels dropped because the team felt that they were "not going in the right direction". It seems like a case of trimming the fat.

Threeway freebies

With the arrival of the Dreamcast, there are three formats that use CD-esque software. Considering this, I think you should consider a one-off *Arcade* special with a disc on the front. I don't mean a demo, rather a video or preview; a trek through an entertainment expo or an interview. I know that not everyone wants a disc on the front of *Arcade*, but a one-off multi-format disc (or one for PC, PlayStation and one for Dreamcast) would be truly different. You said yourself that a lot of money would be headed *Arcade's* way. A one-off experiment can't break the bank and no amount of screenshots can replace actual footage. Failing that, you could slap a video on the front. Either way is good. One way is better.

Peter, Doncaster

You have no idea of the logistics of such a thing... trying to get Sony to agree to a disc that would play on PlayStation and advertise



■ The Dreamcast is here. But will your girlfriend let you buy one?



■ *Soul Reaver: only two thirds finished?*

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■ You too can be as happy as The Lovely Lisa – with an *Arcade* T-Shirt, the prize for letter of the month. She's not wearing any pants, you know.

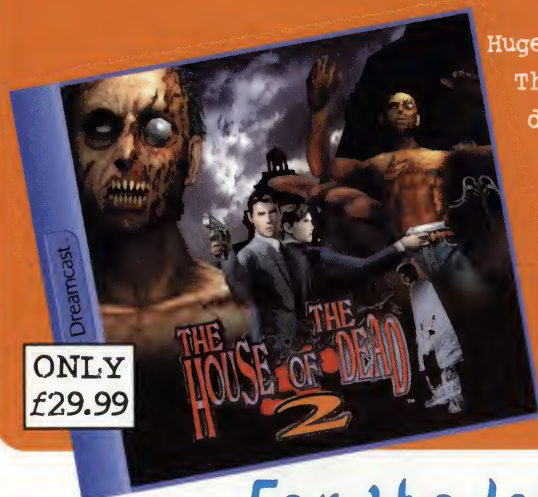


Unfair Advantage N° 26



Kevin's hands on approach
saved goals throughout the season

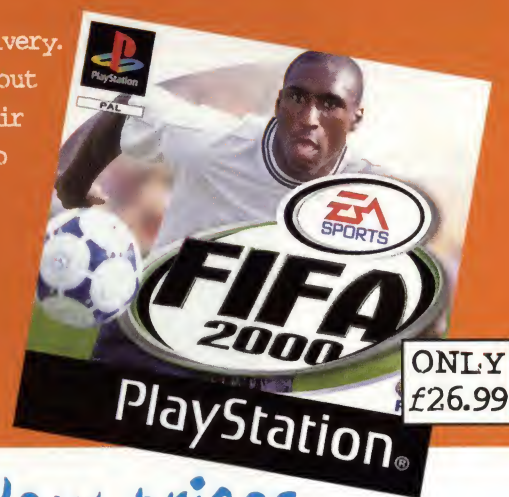
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Enjoy the Unfair Advantage

On the side

For God's sake, I play games while I'm asleep. My room is covered with Sega Posters. I am the Sega nerd! **Robert Timms, Christchurch**

You said it.

There are several things bothering me at the moment in the world of videogames, so I decided to put them down in writing. **K Tanghe, Belgium**

Oh no you didn't.

There was a nice man of 21, Whose Lunn Poly Rep had some fun. The wicked old tart, Booked him up with singles week called Young At Heart, When he thought he was going with Thompson. That happened to me on a Tunisia winter holiday, once. **Nigel Price, Porthcawl**

What are you on about, Nigel?

My dog reads Arcade, you know. He likes The A-List best. **John Coney,**

Your dog obviously has good taste.

What about this?

■ Blimey. Have you turned to our *Confessions of a Lara Fanatic* feature on page 62 yet? Or what about the *Naval Gazing* feature on page 58? Either of them stir any emotions? Then write in and let us know what you think.

Dreamcast... rather you than me. In the near future, however, we will probably see single format cover mounted demo discs offering a lot more than just demos.

Questions, questions

Could you please answer a few questions for me that have been annoying me for a few weeks: will the PlayStation2 support any VR development. I mean it can't be that optimistic to expect it to be able to handle a VR game. I know virtual reality gaming never really took off in the early '90s, but with Craig Charles's television show in 1991 it shows there is a market for it. Also, with the release of the \$400 I-Glasses by Magnate, which give the impression of playing on an 80-inch television screen, could this be the first step to bringing VR gaming into our homes? Maybe affordable VR gaming in our homes is still beyond current technology, but I can't wait for the release of games such as *Resident Evil VR*, *Quake VR* or *Silent Hill VR*.

With the announcement of a modem for the PlayStation2 for on-line gaming, this will no doubt enable downloading from the Internet. If this is the case should Sony be getting worried about PlayStation2 owners downloading a virus onto their machine causing untold damage?

Also, on a more worrying note, will it enable children to access porn via their games console, or has Sony put in safeguard measures to prevent this? **Steve W, Stoke-on-Trent**

In answer to your questions, Sony has not said that PlayStation2 will be able to produce a VR game, but then that would be down to developers. It may be possible, as the PlayStation2 hardware is more powerful than current Silicon Graphics workstations. Certainly games like Half-Life or Quake 3: Arena would benefit enormously from VR and maybe this is the next step for the genre. The glasses you mention would go some way to achieving a sense of immersion but they're a bit expensive aren't they?

In theory, viruses could appear but it's highly unlikely. Sony will have stringent checks on viruses and there's a

good chance that a virus checker will become available anyway. Sony's Web browser, whenever that might appear, will have no restrictions as to which sites it can access. Like the Dreamcast's browser, it is likely to come with a parent lock facility to prevent any unwanted rude pictures entering your home.



■ Dreamcast: you want it, do you sir?

Student angst

My girlfriend says no, my head says no, my heart says yes. But the last time I bought a Sega (for \$400), I ended up regretting it.

And low and behold! Sega wants my money again! No way, I thought, but as a gamer I'm getting drawn into "new machine, must have" territory again. The fact that thousands of students like me receive loans and grants in Sept/Oct surely must be a stroke of genius by Sega. What's \$200 from a \$1,675 loan? But I'm going to try and resist for now. At least until Christmas.

I predict the compulsory price drop of around \$40-50, and game bundles at reduced prices. Memories of the Saturn will always be there, but I'm a gamer. I love games. And if Dreamcast can deliver great games and plenty of them, then I, for one, will be getting one in. Just not on release day. The money I save by waiting, I'll put towards the PlayStation2 or Dolphin. If my girlfriend lets me.

MM, Derby

Bloody students, living off the state, don't know they're born. Our advice is to do whatever your girlfriend tells you, she's probably much more fun than any next gen console. And she won't cost you \$200. Mind you...

The Videogame Magazine Arcade Issue 13

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Special thanks to:

Susie at Core
Shelly Friend at THE

Holiday destinations of the month:

New York
Portugal
And, er, Devon.

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Future Publishing Ltd is part of The Future Network plc which has offices in Bath, London, Milan, Munich, New York, Paris, San Francisco and Somerton – a small village near Frome



UK and overseas newsstand distribution:
Future Publishing Ltd – 01225 442244.
Printed in the UK.
All material © Future Publishing 1999.

Next issue on sale 6 December

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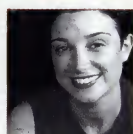
Delicious hand-picked hacks dish out some tasty treats.



Nick Jones

■ The newest addition to Arcade, Games Ed Nick has resisted stripping for the mag so far – he once appeared naked on the cover of *Time Out*. On the important question of who will win the Euro 2000 play-off between England and Scotland, Nick believes the English will win, although he'll probably miss the game as he's busy researching his thesis on "monkeys playing videogames".

■ **Game of the moment:** Vodka darts



Emily Newton Dunn

■ Bits gal Em is of Welsh descent but is backing England in the "Battle of Britain" clash – despite working in Scotland. Emily's talents include commuting from London to Glasgow, smoking cigarettes and presenting late night television programmes. She's been busy punching teeth out and shooting zombies in the face for our *Ready 2 Rumble* and *House of the Dead 2* reviews. Demure.

■ **Game of the moment:** HOTD 2



Martin Kitts

■ N64 maestro Martin leads an exciting globe-trotting life – he's been quoted as saying his favourite city in the world is Hull. Even though the lad is English, he says he couldn't care less who wins the game between England and Scotland. When he's not writing for sister mag N64, Martin keeps by busy finishing off a delicious Tequila Worm lollypop he was given as a present – probably from a Scotsman living in Hull.

■ **Game of the moment:** Shadowman

"Absurdly
enjoyable,
maddeningly
tricky, and
still insanely
playable."


91%

(OFFICIAL WORLD'S BIGGEST N64 MAG)
N64PRO

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The world of videogames: we take you round the globe in seconds



TOKYO GAME SHOW

PlayStation2 set to take over the world

Arcade flies to Tokyo to check out PlayStation2 and a man dressed as a fishing reel.

The autumn Tokyo Game Show lived up to its interesting slogan: "Coming Surprise". It was a show that was dominated by the next generation of consoles and led by PlayStation2. The show was the first time that the public had seen the machine, and it caused an uproar. Representing less than 1% of the software on show, Sony's überconsole drew 99.9% of the crowds.

Most people thronged around the PlayStation2 playable software, which comprised of the deadly duo of *Gran Turismo 2000* and *Tekken Tag Tournament*. While both titles wowed visually, they moved and played almost identically to their original PlayStation counterparts.

Dotted around the stand were development stations running demos in real-time. Many of them were the expected sequels and

bizarre Japanese titles, but a few original titles caught the eye. Surprisingly, perhaps, the most impressive demo on show wasn't *Ridge Racer* or *Tekken*, but *Dark Cloud* – an RPG which enables you to create your own worlds. If you select a 2D object from a menu and place it on a map, you

go at Dreamcast. Those that actually made the trek to Sega's stand were treated with arcade-perfect conversions of *Crazy Taxi*, *Zombie Revenge*, the brilliant *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* and two football titles that will please potential European Dreamcast owners: *Virtua Striker 2* and *Let's*

surprisingly strong Dreamcast software line-up; the thousands of Japanese video game fans packed around the PlayStation2 displays. It was a show symptomatic of a

booming industry: exciting, vibrant and forward-looking. Let's just hope that poor guy in the fishing reel survived the rigours of it all.

Most people thronged around the PlayStation2 playable software.



Can you tell what it is yet?

can zoom into a highly detailed environment complete with forests, rivers, mountains and the like – all of which is stunningly rendered and animated. This kind of thing will go down a storm with Japanese RPG enthusiasts.

Of course, Sega did everything in its power to persuade people to have a

Make a Pro J-League Team. However, the big disappointment for Dreamcast devotees was the announcement of another delay to epic RPG *Shenmue*. The Japanese release has now been put back to the spring, which unfortunately for Sega coincides with the proposed launch of PlayStation2 in Japan.

The last Tokyo Game Show of the millennium will be remembered for many things: Sony's "we're the best, forget the rest" attitude and its visually stunning yet mildly disappointing software showing; Sega's



PlayStation2: hands on

Queue for an hour to play five minutes of *GT 2000*? You bet, and it was well worth the wait. Of course the Dual Shock2 isn't that much different to that of the one you already own – only the pressure

sensitive buttons are different. The game itself plays much like the original PlayStation version. At the moment there is a fair amount of work to be done on backgrounds, but the cars look fantastic.

Without wanting to draw any conclusions on this early code, it's easy to see the enormous potential with this title but as with many of the early PlayStation2 games, *GT 2000* takes few risks.

■ Sony finally shows its hand.



■ Looking good, feeling fine.

BAFTA UPDATE

■ *Half-Life*: will it dominate?



And the winner is...

Nominations announced for the interactive BAFTA awards.

Videogame content features heavily in the list of nominations for the second annual BAFTA Interactive Entertainment awards. Last year's inaugural awards event, introduced to complement the ceremonies held for TV and film, was hailed as a success and described by technophile Lord Puttnam as an important step

forward for the digital entertainment industry. Unfortunately, last year's awards prioritised Web sites and CD-ROMs over videogames, but this year's line-up has the balance about right.

In the Best Game category, Valve's monstrously fine *Half-Life* locks horns in a tantalising encounter with Nintendo's *Zelda* and Illusion's surprise hit *Hidden & Dangerous*. *Half-Life* and *Zelda* are also up for the Most Innovative Game

statuette, along with *Outcast*. The categories of Moving Image, Sound, Design, Interactivity and Programming are all dominated by games with *Driver*, *Aliens Vs Predator* and *Dungeon Keeper 2* all in line for possible glory. A special award for Best UK Developer will be announced on the night. Last year this category was won by Rare.

A panel of industry experts has been put together to judge the nominations and has been joined by Arcade competition winner John Abbot. The awards ceremony itself will be presented by comedienne and Gaytime TV presenter Rhona Cameron during a swanky dinner at London's Royal Lancaster hotel later this month. Naturally, Arcade will be on hand to press the flesh and raid the bar, so expect the results, pictures and the important gossip next month.



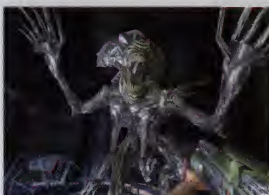
■ *Hidden and Dangerous*



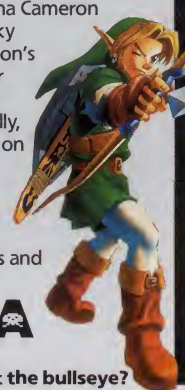
■ *Driver*



■ *Outcast*



■ *Aliens Vs Predator*



■ Will Link hit the bullseye?

Those nominations in full

Best Game

- *Half-Life* (Valve)
- *Hidden & Dangerous* (Illusion)
- *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* (Nintendo)

Most Innovative Game

- *Half-Life* (Valve)
- *Outcast* (Appeal)
- *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* (Nintendo)

Best Use Of Moving Images

- *Driver* (Reflections)
- *Half-Life* (Valve)
- *FA Premier League Stars* (EA)

Best Use Of Sound

- *Aliens Vs Predator* (Rebellion)
- *Dancing Stage* (Konami UK)
- *GTA: London 1969* (Rockstar)

Best Interactive Product

- *Dungeon Keeper 2* (Bullfrog)
- *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* (Nintendo)
- *Masters of the Elements* CD-ROM (Ijfontein)

Best Design

- *Wipeout 3* (Psygnosis)
- *Traitors Gate* (Daydream Software)
- *Guardian Unlimited* Web site

Best Computer Programming

- *Aliens Vs Predator* (Rebellion)
- *Hidden & Dangerous* (Illusion)
- *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* (Nintendo)

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON

steal



■ Smile – you're the first UK owner of a PAL Dreamcast.

DREAMCAST

Judgement Day arrives for Sega

Dreamcast goes on sale and the punters flock in.

The wait for the console of the millennium was over when the Dreamcast finally went on sale on Thursday 14 October.

Stores around the country opened at midnight to accommodate those who couldn't wait until after breakfast to own the new machine. In London, Virgin Megastore, Electronics Boutique and Tower Records all opened their doors shortly before the witching hour to give customers the opportunity to be the first owners of the new 128-bit platform.

While gamers queued to buy the console, Sega continued its off-the-wall marketing campaign to ensure the night was milked for all the media attention it was

worth. Boxers Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn made a fleeting appearance at Virgin for a head-to-head tournament of *Ready 2 Rumble* (the first time they've been in the ring together since 1993), before disappearing off to Tower for a few more rounds of the virtual rough stuff. Chris Eubank even agreed to have the his truck cab sprayed with the Dreamcast logo for the night – much to the admiration of the assembled punters.

Festivities then moved on to Oxford Circus where the Dreamcast logo danced its lasered way from building to building while stilt-walkers and a procession of improvising drummers banged their way into the small hours, for reasons probably best known to Sega. It's still early days to know how

the Dreamcast is doing, but Sega has recorded pre-orders of 42,000 units – worth £8.5 million – in the UK, and some 3,000 people registered on the Dreamcast Web site within hours of the launch.

Europe-wide the company believes it will sell one million units by May 2000, and with its recent performances it needs to.

Last year Sega managed to rack up losses totalling £230 million, and the company has already invested £300 million in the Dreamcast.



Vox Pops

At Virgin Megastore's Dreamcast launch.



■ Hello. "Hello." Who are you? "Irfan." Are you here to buy a Dreamcast, then? "Well, I've got the money, so I'm going to have a quick go and make up my mind on the spot." You'd better hurry up – it goes on sale in 50 minutes. "All right, then." Okay. Thanks. Bye.



■ Hello. Who are you? "Mrs Carslake." How much money have you spent? "£400." Blimey. What did you get? "A Dreamcast, a VM unit, an extra pad, and some games." It's 12.06am. Are you going to go home and play? "Just a quicky. School tomorrow. We'll have to wait 'til the weekend." Okay. Bye.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON

Smack my pitch up

Arcade chances its arm in the hard-nosed world of games development.

No 35: The Horseshoe Thrower 2000

■ **The pitch:** Welcome to the horseshoe throwing game for the next millennium. *HST2000* brings the high-paced, adrenaline pumping action from the village green straight into your own living room.

Work your way through increasingly difficult opponents such as Mike the Postie and Amos the Farmer, and you will eventually reach the ultimate horseshoe battle against the vicar. Beat him and win the ultimate prize:

free entry to the village fête followed by a Pomade-fuelled fumble with Fat Meg, the tea and cake seller.

Special moves include the "Bouncing Bomb", the "Grass Cutter" and the "Boomerang", which flies back into your opponent's face.

Extensive opportunities for customisation enable you to alter the colour of your thrower's M&S sweater and the length and colour of his (or her) muttonchops.

■ **The response:** With our long history of rural games like *GTA: Battery Farm* and *Thresher: Aerate and Destroy*, *Horseshoe Thrower 2000* could work.

Sadly, village-em-up sales are on the wane.

■ Sam Houser, President Rockstar Games.



■ *Ready 2 Rumble*: Eubank vs Benn. Again.



"Gagging for it!"

Glimpses of the late buses of the gaming world.

Shen Mue

Better than life RPG for Dreamcast



So, is this the game that will sell a million Dreamcasts or a tatty little title the developer is wisely keeping well hidden?

Shen Mue

- Format: Dreamcast
- Developer: Sega
- Publisher: Sega
- Release date: TBA

Girl's flares

■ While not essential to plot or playability, the detail in *Shen Mue* is amazing. These trews flap as the young lady walks, and you'll find the title as a whole is animation-heavy.

Textures

■ The most detailed ever seen in a videogame. There is also an incredible variety of textures on show, which lends *Shen Mue* its realistic look.

People

■ The developer of *Shen Mue* boasts that the title has a "living" environment. Included in this are members of the public, who all have their own tasks and objectives to fulfil.

Weather

■ It looks a little overcast here, but there is a real-time weather system in *Shen Mue*. It can change from sun to rain, to snow and back again. Cor.

A Button

■ This is displayed when there is an action you can perform. These actions vary from talking to characters to playing arcade machines.

Clock

■ As the game runs according to time constraints, you need to know what time it is. Important for meeting people, knowing when shops are open and ensuring you get to work on time.

this



■ Hairy trucker.

MONKEY BUSINESS

Donkey Kong 64

Kong rap or over-long crap? Rare goes ape.

One of the most eagerly awaited N64 titles gets its UK release on 3 December.

Donkey Kong 64 is the brand new 3D platforming extravaganza featuring the old arcade stalwart and a family of looney simians.

Creator Rare has also announced details of title screen animation featuring a Donkey Kong rap that serves to introduce

the characters and special moves (see box). The official Nintendo site has called it "amazingly thorough" – a clever PR way of saying "too bloody long".

Nintendo is commemorating the special event by issuing a special N64 bundle with a rather snazzy fluorescent green case, controller and banana-yellow cartridge. In the US, a van with "The Beast is Back" emblazoned on it is touring 15 cities

so American punters can play the game, get a free T-shirt and enter a competition to win an original Donkey Kong coin-op.

The game itself is huge, utilising the 4Mb Expansion Pak to create oodles of colourful explosions, clever animation and smooth frame rates. The jungle weapons each Kong can use include barrels, a grape gun, red feather bow and peanut pistol, the latter of which should come in useful for taking out a few allergic adversaries.

Donkey Kong 64 is packed with hidden puzzles and mini-games such as a Scalextric course and an Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom-inspired mine cart ride. On top of that, gamers will be able to discover and play celebrated '80s Donkey Kong titles and the 8-bit Ultimate Play The Game classic Jet Pac. Watch this space for more bananas goings-on in the coming months.



Monkey scratching

■ Clocking in at more than three minutes, the beginning sequence is both impressive and slightly irritating, featuring the entire cast in a hip-hop style. However, it's hardly Public Enemy or Erik B and Rakim – as you can tell from this edited excerpt...

(Chorus)
D. K. Donkey Kong
D. K. Donkey Kong is here

He's the leader of the bunch
You know him well
He's finally back
To kick some tail

His coconut gun
Can fire in spurts
If he shoots ya
It's gonna hurt
He's bigger, faster
And stronger too
He's the first member
Of the D. K. crew
Huh!

Orient excess

It could only happen in Japan.



Unconventional coin-ops

■ Tokyo recently played host to JAMMA '99, the annual expo for the Japanese coin-op industry. With traditional gaming forms seemingly on the wane, the show seems to have turned into a competition in who could invent the most ridiculous coin-op cabinet. A close second was Taito's *Power Shovel Simulator* in which you handle a vibrating pneumatic drill joystick in order to dig up roads and stuff. Somewhere along the line there



Wide eyed, maraca-toting arcade fun.

are turtles involved. Winner of the most ludicrous coin-op award goes to Sega's *Samba De Amigo* which is a rhythm action game in which the controllers are – yes! – maracas. A grinning monkey sporting a sombrero guides you through the moves in the world's first Bez-'em-up. Indeed, Bez will appear on *Question Time* before these games get their UK release.

NEW C&C TITLE

Meet the renegade master

Latest C&C game puts you in the thick of it.

■ There's no question that *Command & Conquer* is a good game. The strategy classic has spawned a thousand wannabes, but has arguably remained the best of the lot with the release of *Tiberian Sun*. But imagine a game where you could zoom right in to the war zone and see the action from a grunt's eye view – surely that would top the lot? Well that's the concept behind developer Westwood's latest war game,

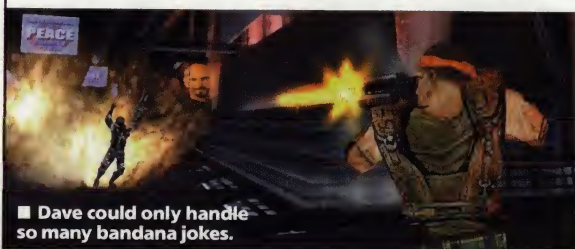
Command & Conquer: Renegade.

Purely an action game, *Renegade* puts you in the role of a soldier in the GDI forces. It's viewed from the third-person and will take place over many of the different landscapes and in buildings from the original titles.

The missions will be scripted much in the same way as *Team Fortress* and will involve you using some of the now-famous vehicles from the C&C

universe, such as the Mammoth tank and Orca attack helicopter. You will even be able to capture enemy vehicles such as the Flame tank and use it to your own ends.

Westwood is promising a graphics engine that tops that of *Quake 3: Arena* and excellent multi-player support. Whatever, C&C: *Renegade* looks certain to bring strategists and action fans together in a cuddly way come its release in the summer.



■ Dave could only handle so many bandana jokes.

INCOMING

Six tantalising glimpses into the gaming crystal ball.

3 months



Micro Machines

- PlayStation
- Codemasters
- January 2000

The fourth in the pint-size racing franchise jettisons cars in favour of speedy little bi-peds called maniacs.



Resident Evil 2

- N64
- Capcom
- December

The horror! Scary zombies finally start eating flesh in Mario's domain. Will utilise the Expansion Pak for gorgeous hi-res graphics.

6 months



Crazy Taxi

- Dreamcast
- Sega
- Spring 2000

Drive like a lunatic, pick up passengers and drop them off as fast as you can in Sega's fab cabbie-sim.



The Real Neverending Story

- PC
- Discreet Monsters
- April 2000

No Limahl, but a groundbreaking games interface and stunning graphics in this ambitious 3D action title.



The Legend of Dragoon

- PlayStation
- Sony
- Spring 2000

Fantasy-themed RPG from the makers of Final Fantasy VI that has spent three years in development.

1 year



Black and White

- PC
- Lionhead Studios
- Summer 2000

Stunning role-playing God-sim where you choose a life of good or evil for a range of bizarre creatures that rule communities of little people.



LITTLE LEAGUE

■ NeoGeo is compatible with Dreamcast.

Neo Geo to take on Game Boy

SNK launches handheld competition for Nintendo.

October has not only seen the launch of Sega's Dreamcast but also another potentially major format, the NeoGeo Pocket Color. However, a head-to-head with the Game Boy seems a daunting prospect. Does the NeoGeo Color have enough to pull it off?

Priced at a competitive £60 and with 14 games available at launch, the NeoGeo Pocket Color has a lot going for it. In a direct comparison with Game Boy Color it has a 16-bit CPU, a screen resolution of 160x152, can display

146 colours at any one time from a palette of 4096. This compares to the Game Boy Color favourably: 8-bit, resolution of 160x144 and 52 colours from a palette of 32,000. However, the NeoGeo's display is considerably brighter than the Game Boy's – enabling you to play in low levels of light.

The quality and variety of the launch software is good: highlights include *Pocket Tennis*, similar to the SNES classic *Smash Tennis*; *Turf Masters*, comparable to *Mario Golf*, and there are a number of competent beat-'em-ups from SNK's classic arcade library. The full list: *NeoGeo Cup Plus*, *Turf Masters*, *Pocket Tennis*, *Pac Man*,

Metal Slug, *Crush Roller*, *King of Fighters Round Two*, *Samurai Showdown*, *Fatal Fury*, *Puzzle Bobble Mini*, *BioMotor Unitron* (an RPG) and three casino-sims. SNK has also announced an impressive list of third party support, including Capcom, Data East, ADK, Atari and Taito.

Games to follow in the next few months are *SNK Vs Capcom*, *King of Fighters R-3* and, best of all, the return of *Sonic the Hedgehog* to a handheld. Sega has pledged its support for the NeoGeo and it will be compatible with Dreamcast – a link cable will be available before Christmas. This will enable the transfer of data

from NeoGeo to the Dreamcast – eventually there will be two versions of a game released: a Dreamcast version and a NeoGeo version. You will be able to play your NeoGeo while you're out and about and when you come home, download the data from the NeoGeo and continue to hammer away on the Dreamcast.

While SNK has its work cut out to take a slice from a market that Nintendo currently dominates, the NeoGeo Pocket Color has a good chance with its stylish looks and some good software. For *Arcade's* verdict on the first NeoGeo Color games see page 102.

Sam Richards' World of Games



Burst the net, on the Net.

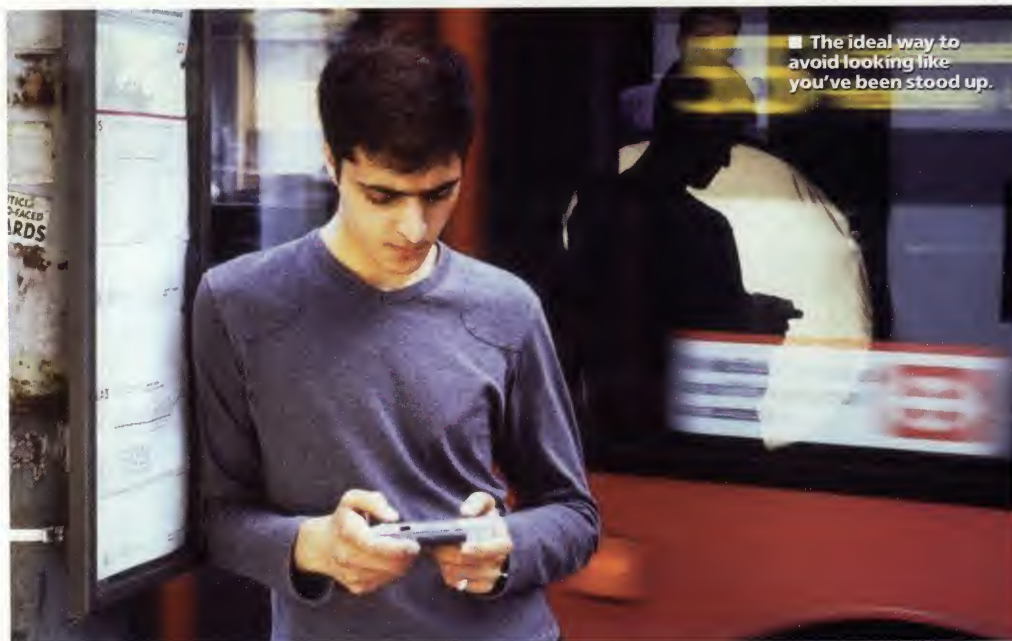
Anco is poised to launch *Player Manager Online*, the first interactive football management game. You'll soon be able to buy and sell players, edit statistics and team details, visit chat rooms and download 3D representation of other players' matchday performances. The game is set for release in January 2000, and has been endorsed by Spurs' George Graham.

Dreamcast in on time

Swiss watchmaker Swatch has joined up with Sega to take advantage of the company's Dreamcast Internet technology. The idea is to incorporate a reader in the Dreamcast to allow a gaming link to Swatch watches. This should open up new possibilities for the creation of Swatch/Sega games in a similar way to the Dreamcast link up with the SNK Neo-Geo. Other plans include the integration of Swatch's "Internet Time".

No second-hand games in Japan?

A mighty wargame is going on in the Japanese courts over used software. Osaka District Court recently ordered two chain stores to stop selling second-hand games. Several companies, including Nintendo, have been fighting to restrict the sale as they feel it diminishes their investment and financial returns. Poor dears.



■ The ideal way to avoid looking like you've been stood up.



■ Top titles are in the pipeline for the new console.

game

GTA2

GAME ON

SPECIAL REPORT



ILLUSTRATION: MATT KENYON

NEWS ANALYSIS

Microsoft's X-Box: is Bill Gates running scared?

A battle for the living room is about to be waged. Arcade inspects the playing field as the console contenders limber up for 2000.

Try to imagine a huge, Manga-style fight between three large, robotic, laser-beam firing dinosaurs – with Sega, Sony and Nintendo stamped on each monster's

head. There's a rumble out to sea, then a violent churning of water as a creature rises out of the ocean. The three fighting behemoths swing around in surprise to see a massive scaly beast with the head of Bill Gates,

roaring indecipherable jargon and heading straight for them.

Last month, the games industry was rocked by the news that the mighty Microsoft has plans to enter the console business itself. According to its

PR company: "Microsoft cannot comment on rumour and speculation." However, the company even has a development programme for it called "Mariner". A select number of publishers and top industry names at Brit videogames trade show ECTS were invited to a behind closed doors briefing about the new console – after signing non-disclosure contracts. The X-Box, which is set for a Christmas 2000 release, will be built by a large PC manufacturer such as Dell, have an Intel processor (more powerful than the PlayStation2); a DVD drive, a hard drive, Internet access and a graphics chip designed by nVidia.

Reaction to the X-Box was swift. Sony Europe's Chris Deering used the news to have a pop at the Windows CE-powered Dreamcast. He told *The Sunday Times*: "If there is any truth in these rumours, the move seems to be a signal of disappointment and one of a loss of confidence in Sega's new Dreamcast in which Microsoft is a partner". This was immediately countered by Charles Bellfield of Sega America: "We've known about this for ages," he said to *Games Business* magazine. "The way we're going is very different. We are not a digital home network entertainment centre company. The [X-Box] is aimed at a different market, at a higher cost. It's targeting PlayStation2."

So why has Bill Gates decided to enter the videogames market? The fact is, he can't afford to ignore it any longer. Sony has now admitted what it previously denied – that it would like the PlayStation2 to become the new household entertainment centre.

This is the very real threat to Bill Gates' empire. If a console becomes available that plays games reliably, has an add-on keyboard for simple word processing, Internet access and hard-disk storage for £200, most



"A quality experience... varied and excellent gameplay"

91% PLAYSTATION POWER

"A range of guns and gizmos so big it hurts"

PLAYSTATION PLUS

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Good morning, Mr. Phelps. Prepare to enter the most demanding Mission: Impossible ever. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, will be to guide your team through 5 spectacular missions, encompassing over 20 levels of game-play. As always should you, or any member of your IM Force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions.

This information will not self-destruct in five seconds, but you may... Good Luck Jim!

Sony would like the Playstation2 to become the new household entertainment centre.

people would buy that rather than spend more than a grand for a bulky, temperamental PC.

More worrying for Microsoft is research group IDC's recent prediction that by 2002 the PC won't be the most popular device for accessing the Internet. The loss of PC Internet business would be a disaster for Gates, who is currently spending millions of dollars fighting the US government in court over the practice of including the Internet Explorer program with all copies of Windows.

What about the opinions of the games developers? All the companies briefed at ECTS are keeping tight-lipped, but Squaresoft – maker of the *Final Fantasy* series – has already commented on Microsoft's entry into the console market. Yoshiro Maruyama told *Bloomberg News* in the US that: "the biggest player cannot ignore this market any more. If [Microsoft] decide to come in, their commitment will be very firm. They could be the biggest competitor to Sony."

As with the Dreamcast, having a console version of a PC is very attractive as conversion of existing games would be a simple task, and future title development costs could be cut if one format would serve for both a console and PC. Also, as American analyst Nick Gibson observed, the X-Box could "boost the market size for Microsoft's games division, which is where the bigger margins lie".

The one thing that the industry has learnt since Sony launched the PlayStation in 1995

is that a virtual outsider can successfully enter the videogame market if it can manage to provide good hardware, have great marketing and wads of cash – as well as some decent games. Microsoft has all that, plus its superlative software division, which, as it stands, is already the fourth largest PC games manufacturer in the market.

However, if Microsoft opts to produce a cut-price platform that can run PC games it would immediately exclude PC owners. Without X-Box-specific software and a killer application – such as *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* proved for the Nintendo 64 – there would be no reason for buyers to plump for the console. The new machine will need a whole range of cracking and exclusive titles so people have to purchase the system to play them; otherwise why would potential buyers bother shelling out?

This is where the Dreamcast scores, as it has the back-up of Sega's arcade titles plus the ability to port tip-top games such as *Quake 3: Arena*.

The "battle for the living room", as it has been called, reaches a critical stage at the end of 2000 when the Dreamcast, PlayStation2, Nintendo Dolphin and X-Box fight it out for the hearts and minds of the next generation of gamers.

Bill Gates' Microsoft monster has finally risen from the watery depths to challenge the domination of the mighty Japanese gaming beasts, but has it all happened too late? 

HOW THEY MEASURE UP

The Competition

A battle guide to the next-generation console war.

Microsoft X-Box

- **Processor:** 500MHz Intel chip
- **Polygons per second:** N/A
- **Storage medium:** DVD-ROM
- **Modem:** 56.6 kbps
- **Other info:** Will have nVidia graphics, a Windows operating system, and hard disk
- **Launch date & price:** Christmas 2000 for approximately £200

Sega Dreamcast

- **Processor:** 200MHz, 128-bit graphic engine
- **Polygons per second:** 3 million
- **Storage medium:** GD-ROM – with a DVD-ROM "deluxe" version promised for the future.
- **Modem:** 33.6 kbps
- **Other info:** Available a year before its rivals. Will have a large range of arcade-quality titles
- **Launch date & price:** 14 October 1999 for £199



Sony PlayStation2

Nintendo Dolphin

- **Processor:** 400MHz copper technology chip co-designed with IBM
- **Polygons per second:** "As fast as anything our friends at Sony have," according to Howard Lincoln, chairman of Nintendo America
- **Storage medium:** DVD-ROM – with special piracy protection
- **Modem:** N/A
- **Other info:** Designed by ArtX, a company set up by the designer of the Nintendo 64
- **Launch date & price:** Looking increasingly like it will be delayed until mid-2001 at a cost of £199

- **Processor:** 300MHz chip designed by Toshiba
- **Polygons per second:** 66 million raw polygons
- **Storage medium:** DVD-ROM
- **Modem:** N/A
- **Other info:** Has backwards compatibility with original PlayStation and unrivalled software support
- **Launch date & price:** 4 March 2000 in Japan; Autumn 2000 in Europe for £199

Glorious PC games for the Box?

Could these be the PC-conversions that give gamers the requisite push to down their current tools and run for the Microsoft console?



■ **Black and White:** Is Microsoft's console still a grey area?

Black and White

Peter Molyneux's stunning new God-sim with RPG elements. Surely you've heard of this?

Quake 3: Arena

Id's new 3D shooter. It might be a bit violent.

Midtown Madness

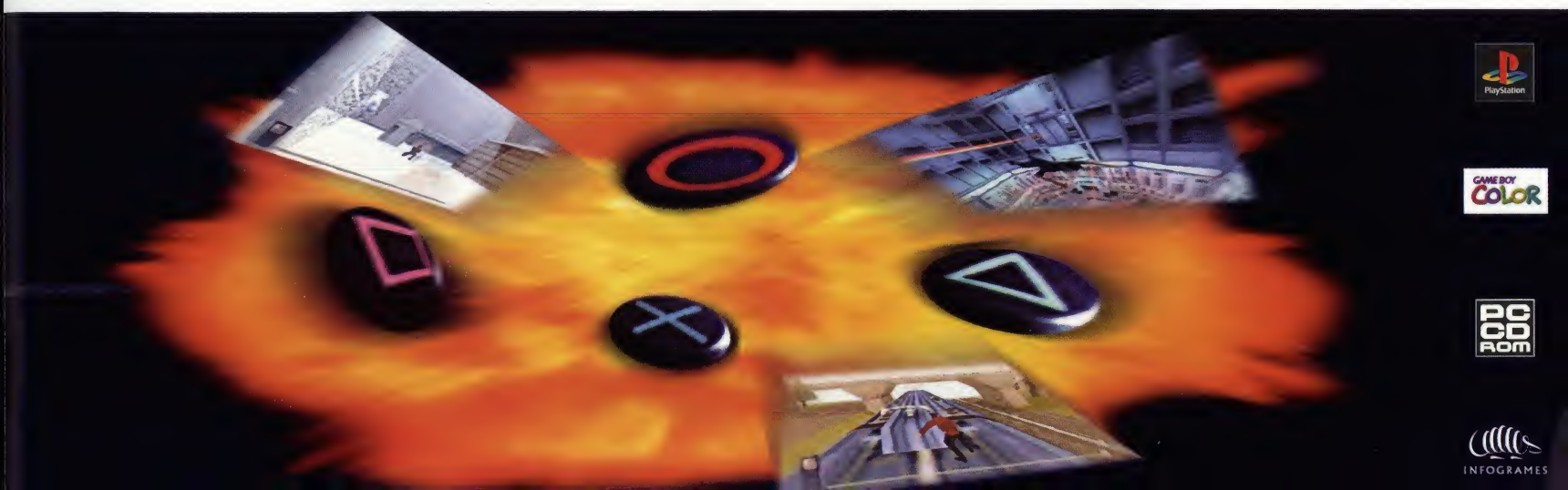
Another possible X-Box-only title from Microsoft that pits you against the worst enemies ever – other road users. The horror...

Unreal Tournament

Epic Games' superlative multi-player frag-fest. Bloody marvellous.

Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings

Microsoft's own chivalrous strategy game. The company could also keep it exclusively for the X-Box.



THE KINGDOM, THE



COMING THIS MILLENNIUM

Available 29th October 1999

From Dixons, Electronics Boutique, Game, HMV, John Lewis Partnership,
PC World, Staples, Virgin, WH Smith and other leading retailers.

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AGE of EMPIRES THE AGE OF KINGS

Lead thy people to glory with William Wallace, Saladin,
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Slaughter thine enemies and achieve victory through conquest,
economic stranglehold, exploration, guile or simple brute force.

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GAME ON

COMING SOON



It's time to whet that gaming appetite with a peek into the future to see which games are going to set tongues slaver over the next few months. *Arcade* brings you no less than eight cracking previews plus a lovely in-depth Release Schedule with loads of games and dates to pore over at your leisure. Enjoy.

■ (Right) Empty my litter tray, punk.



■ (Left) Pets win prizes. In this case, a haul of incredibly powerful weapons.

■ (Below) See you later, alligator.



APRIL 2000

Format: **PC/ Dreamcast** | Developer: **Bizarre Creations** | Publisher: **Acclaim** | Players: **1-4** | On sale in UK: **April 2000**

FURBALLS

Violently cute platforming shoot-'em-up.

Ask yourself this: would you give a friendly monkey a sawn-off shotgun to see what would happen next? Or furnish a guinea pig with a flamethrower and supply of mines? If you like the idea of cuddly, fluffy animals with weaponry, then you're going to kill for the new shooting/puzzling extravaganza from Liverpool-based mad-as-a-hatter developer Bizarre Creations.

Furballs wowed a select few journo and industry bods at the ECTS show earlier this year with its insane collection of cartoon characters: including a Welsh dragon, a panda from China and a superb

Glaswegian dog who can duff anyone in.

The game features six animal warriors who are hellbent on rescuing their families from evil kidnapper and comedy geneticist General Viggo. To this end they must take on a succession of nasty baddies and – as you'd expect – there's shooting galore; but as *Furballs* is a next-gen platformer, there's also a fair bit of jumping and puzzle-solving.

One of the joys of *Furballs* is that it requires you to play as all of the characters. Each animal has a unique skill that will help you in your quest; so Tweak the dragon can glide down from high places, while Rico the Argentinian penguin gets to swim.

Visually the game shines with a gorgeous cartoony quality that really shows off the graphical whizz-bangs of the

Dreamcast. The characters are all super-smooth, and the different worlds and effects are all multi-coloured marvels. All this, combined with a wicked sense of humour, *Furballs* reminds you of the classic Cosgrove-Hall cartoons like *Dangermouse*.

As well as the story-driven main game, there's a mad two-player (see Best Bit So Far) which is great fun and gives you the chance to pitch all the different animals against each other to see who kicks furry ass in the animal kingdom.

Furballs is set for release in April 2000, and judging from the working-progress version, it has all the exploration and pick-up-and-play of *Super Mario 64* combined with the weaponry of *Quake*. Arm that otter with a chainsaw and join in the frolics.

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PC/Dreamcast

Crazily violent cartoon blaster populated by psycho pets.

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PC

Third-person adventure starring a heavenly baby.

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PlayStation

Extravagantly gory beat-'em-up featuring the Wu-Tang Clan.

P29 Theme Park World

PlayStation/PC

Create your own Alton Towers and keep the kids happy.

P30 This is Football / ISS Pro Evolution

PlayStation

Future footballing opportunities.

P31 The Sims / Le Mans 24 Hours

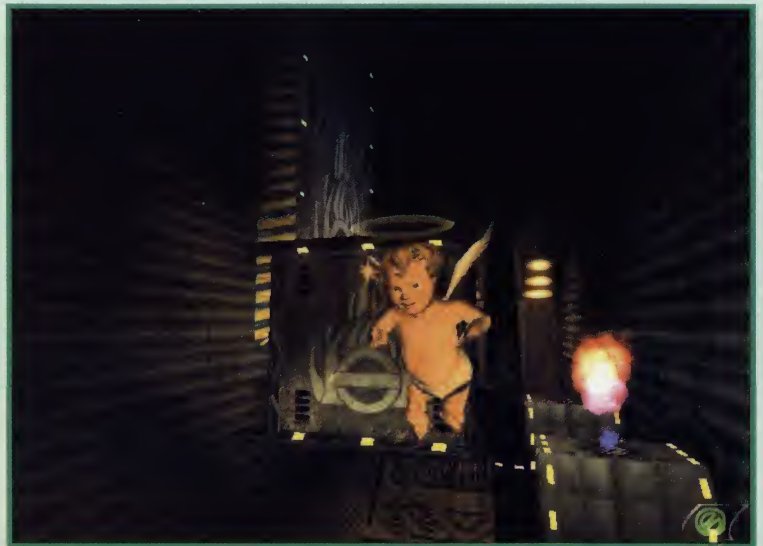
PlayStation/PC

Make believe you're a racing star, or that you have a life.



■ **Wu-Tang:**
Taste the Pain.





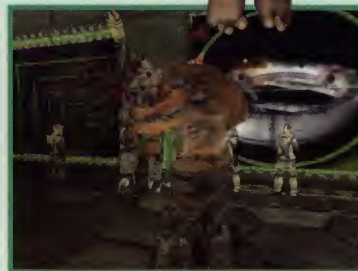
■ Above: Bob prepares to enter another victim from behind.

■ Left: Aaagh! Green baby shit alert!



■ He's the big baby with the bad attitude – but soooo cute!

■ I guess they call it, Nappy Love...



BEST BIT SO FAR

Taking possession

■ Shiny shows off its dark sense of humour in *Messiah*'s possession sequence. After Bob pounces, his victims writhe around in a head-shaking frenzy until they sport a halo, indicating Bob's in charge. He can now sneak around, attack people or, even better, walk the character off a high ledge before jumping out of their body, saving himself and leaving the poor unfortunate to plummet earthwards. Hilarious.



FEBRUARY 2000

Format: **PC** | Developer: **Shiny** | Publisher: **Virgin Interactive** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **February 2000**

MESSIAH

Say halo to evil in a dark action game that's just heavenly.

You would imagine that an avenging angel cast down to a nightmare future world to stop the arrival of a terrifying evil force would be a scary sight; a horrible scaly beast with huge black wings, long gnarled fingers and the face of Trevor MacDonald perhaps? But no. This angelic assassin is a baby-faced cherub called Bob.

Messiah is the long-awaited new game from Shiny Entertainment, the company set up by eccentric Dave "MDK" Perry to produce games with a twisted world view. The game has already been in development for a couple of years, but programmer Ego

was keen that it should only be released when it was 100% ready – a tactic that paid off handsomely for Valve's *Half-Life*.

The chubby cherub in *Messiah* has no weapons to help him overcome evil, but he has the ability to possess and take control of any character, which he does by sneaking up behind them and jumping between their shoulder blades. He can then walk about unnoticed, solve puzzles and wreak havoc by taking people out.

As well as possession and the odd bit of flying – courtesy of some cute wings – Bob has a few other powers he can call on, including invisibility and a speed-up that enables him to run circles around people, dodging bullets like a *Matrix*-inspired Keanu Reeves. The halo-wearing hero has to be

careful though, because he can be killed just like any other Earth-dwelling mortal.

This impressive third-person 3D adventure was shown at ECTS in London and looked visually stunning, sporting a brand new graphics engine that should enable even the lowliest of Pentium PCs to run it. There's a hatful of nifty lighting effects, some hilarious animation and a great collection of characters for Bob to possess, including mechanics, street thugs, pimps and prostitutes.

Messiah is certainly shaping up to be the strange, violent, funny game that it always promised to be. Evil better beware, there's a new sheriff in town. He may be wearing a nappy but he's as mad as all hell, and then some.



■ Self possessed?

GAME ON

COMING SOON



■ While it looks like a mighty morris dance, four-player mode is vicious fare...

■ ...but two-player action is where it's at. Gore courtesy of the parental lock codes.



DECEMBER 1999

Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Paradox** | Publisher: **Activision** | Players: **1-4 (with multi tap)** | On sale in UK: **December 1999**

WU TANG: TASTE THE PAIN

GZA, RZA, Raekwon and the Clan bring some ruckus shaolin style.

Most hip-hop groups are adept at inventing ridiculous soubriquets, aligning themselves with some cock-eyed mythology in a bid for bad-boy credibility. Like the true lords of hip-hop they are, the Wu-Tang Clan do all these things better and to far greater excess than anyone else. To the point where Robert Diggs becomes RZA aka The RZArector aka Prince Rakeem aka Bobby Steels. To the point where they seem to actually believe they are the reincarnations of ancient shaolin warriors. To the point

where it makes sense for them to have their own PlayStation game.

The only other group with identifiable alter-egos worthy of videogame immortalisation recently have been the Spice Girls, but their game was a joyless shambles of dancing and make-up. The Wu-Tang Clan have overseen the creation of *Taste The Pain* and – being gamers themselves – wanted to see it done properly. As a result, nine of the Wu-Tang Clansters appear as playable fighters in this distinctly gory beat-'em-up.

RZA and Mastah Killah brandish swords, GZA's got a whip-chain and Method Man wields a hefty mallet. The fighting styles correspond with the attributes of the rappers' alter-egos, and so Ol' Dirty Bastard

slugs in a drunken (yet effective) manner. Maximum chaos is provided in four-player mode, which is outstanding – and unique.

However, while battering three of your mates at once is an attractive proposition, the reality is a bit messy. Two-player mode is superior, and displays decidedly impressive beat-'em-up mechanics which should lure in hip-hop shy fight fans.

Developer Paradox adapted the game engine from *Thrill Kill*, an S&M-styled beat-'em-up canned by EA. The gore remains, as every victory move in *Taste The Pain* is accompanied by a cut scene where the opponent is maimed or decapitated – with blood aplenty spurting all over the shop.

Wu-Tang: Taste The Pain may not be the most accomplished beat-'em-up ever

■ He may wear slippers, but he ain't on the pipe.



BEST BIT SO FAR

The 36 Chambers

Working out exactly what the 36 chambers of Wu-Tang legend are is no mean feat, but in *Taste The Pain* they represent objectives in Story mode. Rather than just defeating opponents to progress, you're required to display a number of skills; for instance, you may have to implement a special move or combo. Complete five similar objectives and you're rewarded with new moves for your character, which are essential if you want to progress – particularly when you fight against three enemies simultaneously.



created but the Story mode (see box) and four-player option are neat original features above and beyond the Wu-Tang Clan's involvement. Add a smattering of weirdo Wu philosophy, some strange FMV appearances from the Clan themselves and three exclusive Wu offerings on the soundtrack, and this is a game which demands the attention of wannabe headz everywhere.



■ Instant critical feedback is provided by thought bubbles above the children's heads.

■ (Right) Nice loops, baby.



■ Remember, elderly labour comes cheap.

PLAYSTATION



■ Four themes are available – above and right are examples of the Lost World.

■ The walkie talkie icon gives you quick and easy menu access.

PLAYSTATION



BEST BIT SO FAR

Feeling sick?

■ The ability to utilise your ruthless capitalist nous to the full is retained from *Theme Park*. It's not simply a case of salting the food in order to sell more drinks, however. The kids are wise to such ploys and if you skimp on the burger quality, they will visibly turn green and sick up all over the place. And if the little critters aren't satisfied with the quality of your rides, they will begin to attack your staff. Such assaults can be minimised with the deployment of a strong security presence, but you must always make a pretence of keeping your staff happy; they're a mutinous bunch and will down tools at the first sign of a wage freeze.



NOVEMBER 1999/JANUARY 2000

Format: **PC PlayStation** | Developer: **Bullfrog** | Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Players: **1**
On sale in UK: **November (PC)/January 2000 (PlayStation)**

THEME PARK WORLD

Roll over Chessington and tell Alton Towers the news.

Five years ago *Theme Park* from Bullfrog invented a new gaming genre. Here was a strategy title which had nothing to do with commanding armies or conquering worlds, but instead enabled you to construct rollercoasters to put Blackpool's "Pepsi Big One" to shame. Fantasies of stupendous dips and corkscrews were blended with capitalist megalomania as you took all the cash you could from your patrons.

And so it is again in *Theme Park World*. But – as you'd expect – this installation

shows a half-decade's worth of improvement, and this is immediately apparent from *Theme Park World*'s stunning graphical assault. The hi-res 3D environments make those of recent pretenders such as *Rollercoaster Tycoon* look like a rusted climbing frame in comparison. Within the four available themes (Space, Fantasy, Lost Kingdom and Halloween), you'll be able to build rides ranging from the simplest bouncy castle to log flumes and flamboyant double rollercoasters. Best of all, you can switch from the typical God viewpoint into first-person mode and wander around the park of your own creation. This includes the

ability to actually ride your own rollercoasters and determine for yourself whether you've invented a dastardly dipper or a no-thrills trundler.

The interface of *Theme Park World* is designed to place novice gamers directly into the eye of the storm. Within minutes of loading you can open your gates to hordes of expectant kiddies, who will begin wailing, moaning and vomiting incessantly until you gradually tailor your park to meet their need for cheap thrills and ice cream. An advisor in the corner of the screen will suggest priorities for your next investment.

Once you have expanded your theme park franchise in order to maximise profits,

the next step is to enter Bullfrog's *Theme Park World* Web site. This will be an integral element of the game – the site can be accessed from within the game and there you will find additional rides and themes to download, postings for the world's best theme parks, chat rooms, and the opportunity to send a child spy into other people's parks in order to glean trade secrets and generally nose around.

The PlayStation version of *Theme Park World* will be a direct PC port, although it compensates for the lack of on-line interaction by providing more structured goals. Golden Tickets will be awarded when certain targets (height of rollercoaster, profit on snack bars) are met. There will also be 16 mini-games hidden in the PlayStation version. If you've ever visited a crumbling pleasure beach and wondered why they couldn't just replace the crap haunted house with a lunch-loosening ride akin to Oblivion at Alton Towers, start saving for *Theme Park World* – it's awesome. **A**

GAME ON

COMING SOON



■ Superior animation means you can see the players kick the ball, as opposed to it magically moving.



■ The brilliant stadia only add the game's carnival atmosphere.



DECEMBER 1999

BEST BIT SO FAR

It's him, isn't it?

No more dodgy faces, bad haircuts, or anonymous players taking the place of your favourite team. *This is Football* is the best attempt ever made to transport real footballers into the world inside your PlayStation. SCEE boasts that there are more than 20,000 possible variations of player faces and build, the knock-on affect being that you could recreate your primary school team in the game, or put your face into the England line up.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **SCEE** | Publisher: **SCEE** | Price: **£40**
Players: **1-8 (with multi tap)** | On sale in UK: **December 1999**

THIS IS FOOTBALL

Christmas competition for FIFA unveiled.

A Christmas head-to-head with FIFA? Is SCEE mad? Well, if you look at the development team's history, then you'll realise that the idea of it doing a "football" is inspired. Partly responsible for the *Total NBA* series, the team has spent two years in research and development for *This is Football*, the hope being to deliver the definitive football gaming experience to the PlayStation.

Simplicity and intuitive play seem to be the key to the game: the control method –

arguably the most important part of a footie game – can be modified, which allows for complex moves to be performed without recourse to finger gymnastics.

A lot has gone into making the digital players look as close to their real-life counterparts as possible. This detail is carried over into the stadia and animation, with touches like camera flashes in the crowd and a system where by the virtual players actually "kick" the ball.

There are options galore, including being able to create a club, and as the game is produced in association with FIFPU, all the team and player names are in there. *This is Football* looks sure to give FIFA a good run for its Christmas money. **A**



■ Zinedine Zidane is faithfully recreated, right down to the bald patch.

■ All your tactical needs will be catered for, you budding little Kevin Keagans, you.



FEBRUARY 2000

BEST BIT SO FAR

Point blank save.

Glory boys around the world rejoice! You can now bore your mates to death with your very own collection of "goals of the month". *ISS Pro Evolution* enables you to save your favourite 30 yard overhead volleys to memory card to view at your leisure. You will be able to spot the ball at different speeds and – thanks to the game's custom viewing suite – from almost any angle. You'll be well pleased with its performance.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Konami** | Publisher: **Konami** | Price: **£40**
Players: **1-4 (with multi tap)** | On sale in UK: **February 2000**

ISS PRO EVOLUTION

The undisputed king of football games returns.

As the name so rightly indicates, *Evolution* isn't a massive leap forward from the previous *ISS* games. However, a few major things have been improved. Player AI is one, and the height and position of the ball also makes a lot of difference to play. This variety also helps *Evolution* avoid succumbing to the mindless patterns of play common to other football games.

There are plenty of play options: you have the power to edit player and team names, make your own team and – most

interestingly – in a nod towards football management you can buy in players with points won in a European Master League, which pits the best continental clubs against one another.

As you would expect from this series, player animation is superb, as are the television style replays – after every major incident you'll be treated to a slow motion of the whole thing. However, the most significant change in the game is that players can now make mistakes, make bad passes and miss headers. This is a subtle change but it makes the game feel a lot more realistic. The way things are going, *ISS Pro Evolution* is shaping up to be one of the best football games ever. **A**



■ (Above) Communication can be a problem in shared houses.

■ (Right) Story getting dull? Torch the joint...



JANUARY 2000

Format: **PC** | Developer: **Maxis** | Publisher: **Electronic Arts** | Players: **1** |
On sale in UK: **January 2000**

THE SIMS

His life's in ruins and it's all your fault.

Gary's in a bad way. He has just been sacked from his job at the army base for turning up late every day, he can't get a girlfriend and his bachelor pad is piled high with festering pizza boxes. He's even considering topping himself. A tragic story of everyday failure at the university of life.

Except Gary's situation is all your fault. It was you who forgot to furnish his house with a clock, which is why he got fired. You also forgot to give him a cooker, hence the pizza boxes, and you didn't employ a maid, hence the mess. Oops. You also forgot to

BEST BIT SO FAR

The living soap

■ When working on developing a young bachelor such as Gary, you'll undoubtedly have to put him through the life-enhancing experience that is the shared house. Once contained within a small environment of several differing personalities, it'll be difficult for Gary to resist a bit of banter with his male housemates, or perhaps an attempt at seducing the female ones. This could lead to increased friendships and bonds with compatible personalities, but if he makes a pass at a girl who hates his guts, she'll stomp on his gifts, slap him around the face and get one of her male friends to kick his head in.



give Gary anything to do and he has become socially inept – hence the lack of lady action. Tricky business, this life stuff.

The Sims is the latest game from Will Sim City Wright, and it looks and plays like his town-managing classics. Your job is to mould a community from a cast of individuals that you create from a series of set characteristics. You must buy your charges a house and possessions (with a limited budget), find them a job and get them interacting with other sim people.

Boasting a typically vast base of options arranged within a highly approachable interface, *The Sims* could well make social work the first gaming trend of the new millennium. **A**



■ "Vas y, molo!" as they say in France. Honest.

■ There isn't just one circuit. *Le Mans* features plenty of made up tracks.



■ Night time, day time – the race lasts 24 hours, you know.



DECEMBER 1999

Format: **PC/PlayStation** | Developer: **Eutechnyx** | Publisher: **Infogrames** | Players: **1-2** |
On sale in UK: **December**

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Spend an entire day with your computer.

The 24 Heures du Mans is the premier motor sport event in the world. The finest drivers and car manufacturers have taken part, and the event is steeped as much in romance as high-octane fuel.

That said, it's a surprise no-one has attempted to turn it into a videogame before. *Le Mans 24 Hours* does, and offers you a number of play modes: arcade, simulation (where you can play for 24 hours or condense the experience), a head-to-head for network play or split-screen on PlayStation. Championship mode is where it's at, as you can race for the various teams

BEST BIT SO FAR

The pits

Racing for 24 hours takes a lot out of a car, which is why *Le Mans* is so renowned among motor sports fans. *Le Mans 24 Hours* has done an excellent job of recreating the experience, as if you opt for any of the simulation modes expect to have to slip into the pits a few times. Wear and tear and any crash damage have been built into the game, and choosing the right time for a tune-up can win or lose you the race.



and take part in an imaginary world championship, culminating at Le Mans.

The race teams have approved everything in the game from the 50 cars on offer to the performance, specifications and handling of different models and classes – the GT1, GT2 and the prototype cars. On top of this, the accuracy of the Circuit de la Sarthe is fantastic, right down to the positioning and types of trees and the varying quality of the road surface.

Le Mans 24 Hours may have a lot of competition on both formats, but the licence and detail should ensure the game gets a warm welcome. Just remember, this isn't a case of first-past-the-post – it's the mileage that counts. **A**

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Like a busy porn star, videogames are forever coming. Well, these little beauties are...

NOVEMBER

5th	FIFA 2000	Electronic Arts	PSX
5th	Indiana Jones and the Infernal...	Activision	PSX
5th	Nascar 2000	Electronic Arts	PSX
5th	Prince Naseem Hamed Boxing	Code Masters	PSX
5th	Spyro 2	SCEE	PSX
5th	F1 Racing Simulation	Video System	DC
5th	Get Bass Fishing	Sega	DC
5th	FIFA 2000	Electronic Arts	PC
5th	Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	Infogrames	PC
5th	Legoland	Lego Media	PC
5th	Star Trek - Secret Of Vulcan Fury	Activision	PC
5th	Mario Golf	Nintendo	CGB
5th	Mickey Mouse Racing	Nintendo	CGB
5th	TOCA Touring Cars	Codemasters	CGB
5th	Tom & Jerry	Nintendo	CGB
5th	YODA Stories	THQ	CGB
5th	Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	Electronic Arts	N64
5th	World Driver Championship	Midway	N64

7th	X-Com Alliance	Sierra	PC
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12th	Nightmare Creatures 2	Activision	PSX
12th	Xena-Warrior Princess	Electronic Arts	PSX
12th	Puchi Carat	PBH Systems	PSX
12th	Trick N Snowboarder	Virgin	PSX
12th	Knockout Kings '2000	Electronic Arts	PSX
12th	No Fear Mountain Bike	Codemasters	PSX
12th	Worms Pinball	Infogrames	PSX
12th	WCW Mayhem	Electronic Arts	PSX
12th	Red Dog	Sega	DC
12th	WWF: Attitude	Acclaim	DC
12th	Marvel Vs Capcom	Virgin	DC
12th	Flight Simulator 2000	Microsoft	PC
12th	Prey	GT Interactive	PC
12th	Rally Masters	Infogrames	PC
12th	NBA Live 2000	Electronic Arts	PC
12th	Star Trek - First Contact	Activision	PC
12th	Theme Park World	Electronic Arts	PC
12th	Track & Field	Konami	CGB
12th	Jimmy White's Cueball	Virgin	CGB
12th	Disney's Magical Tetris	Nintendo	CGB
12th	Gauntlet Legends	Midway	N64
12th	Jet Force Gemini	Nintendo	N64
12th	Knockout Kings '2000	Electronic Arts	N64
12th	Nightmare Creatures 2	Activision	N64
12th	Paperboy	Midway	N64
12th	Worms Armageddon	Infogrames	N64

17th	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	CGB
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19th	Fear Factor	Eidos	PSX
19th	Cyber Tiger	Electronic Arts	PSX
19th	Demolition Racer	Infogrames	PSX
19th	Expendable	Infogrames	PSX
19th	Chef's Luv Shack	Acclaim	PSX
19th	Ronin Blade	Konami	PSX
19th	NBA Live 2000	Electronic Arts	PSX
19th	Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	PSX
19th	Premier Manager 2000	Infogrames	PSX
19th	Worldwide Soccer 2000	Sega	DC
19th	Worms: Armageddon	Infogrames	DC
19th	Space Invaders	Activision	N64
19th	Armourines	Acclaim	N64
19th	Road Rash 64	THQ	N64
19th	Chef's Luv Shack	Acclaim	N64
19th	Nuclear Strike 64	Electronic Arts	N64
19th	Turok: Rage Wars	Acclaim	N64

19th	Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	N64
19th	Half-Life: Opposing Force	Sierra	PC
19th	Half-Life: Team Fortress 2	Sierra	PC
19th	Slave Zero	Electronic Arts	PC
19th	Micro Machines Turbo	Codemasters	CGB
19th	Ronaldo V Football	Infogrames	CGB
19th	Mission Impossible	Infogrames	CGB
19th	Spy Hunter/Moon Patrol	Midway	CGB
19th	Turok: Rage Wars	Acclaim	CGB

26th	Formula One	SCEE	PSX
26th	Overblood 2	PHB Systems	PSX
26th	Le Mans 24 Hour	Infogrames	PSX
26th	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	Virgin	PSX
26th	South Park Rally	Acclaim	PSX
26th	Spider-Man	Activision	PSX
26th	Urban Chaos	Eidos	PSX
26th	Qbert	Hasbro	PSX
26th	Tomb Raider-Premier Collection	Eidos	PSX
26th	Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	PSX
26th	Wu Tang Clan: Taste The Pain	Activision	PSX
26th	Warpath: Jurassic Park	Electronic Arts	PSX
26th	Tomorrow Never Dies	Electronic Arts	PSX
26th	South Park Rally	Acclaim	DC
26th	Soul Calibur	Sega	DC
26th	Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	DC
26th	Le Mans 24 Hour	Infogrames	PC
26th	Battlezone 2	Activision	PC
26th	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PC
26th	Mortyr 2093 - 1944	Electronic Arts	PC
26th	UNREAL Tournament Edition	GT Interactive	PC
26th	Urban Chaos	Eidos	PC
26th	Tomb Raider-Premier Collection	Eidos	PC
26th	Super Smash Bros	Nintendo	N64
26th	Resident Evil 2	Virgin	N64
26th	Ridge Racer 64	Nintendo	N64
26th	South Park Rally	Acclaim	N64
26th	Spider-Man	Activision	N64
26th	Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	N64

27th	NHL Hockey '99	Electronic Arts	N64
TBA	Official Formula 1	Eidos	PSX
TBA	Fighting Force 2	Eidos	DC
TBA	Bust A Move 4	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Carmageddon 3:		
TBA	Death Race 2000	SCI	PC
TBA	Indiana Jones	Activision	PC
TBA	Interstate '82	Activision	PC
TBA	Dark Reign 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Demolition Racer	Infogrames	PC
TBA	Official Formula 1 Racing	Eidos	PC
TBA	Star Trek - Insurrection	Activision	PC
TBA	Vampire: The Masquerade	Activision	PC
TBA	Rainbow Six	Take 2	N64
TBA	Jeremy McGrath 2000	THQ	N64
TBA	Gauntlet Legends	Midway	CGB
TBA	Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko	Eidos	CGB
TBA	Resident Evil 2	Virgin	CGB

DECEMBER

3rd	Dune 2000	Electronic Arts	PSX
3rd	Road Rash: Unchained	Electronic Arts	PSX
3rd	NBA 2000	Electronic Arts	DC
3rd	Donkey Kong 64	Nintendo	N64
3rd	WWF: Wrestlemania 2000	Acclaim	N64
3rd	Episode 1 - Racer	Nintendo	CGB
3rd	Game & Watch Gallery 3	Nintendo	CGB

3rd	Quake 3: Arena	Activision	PC
7th	GT2 (Gran Turismo 2)	SCEE	PSX
10th	I.S.S. Pro: Evolution	Konami	PSX
10th	Virtua Striker 2	Sega	DC
17th	Crash Team Racing	SCEE	PSX
17th	Die Hard Trilogy 2	Fox Interactive	PSX

18th	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	PSX
31st	Diablo 2	Activision	PC

TBA	Baldurs Gate	3DO	PSX
TBA	Caesars Palace 2000	3DO	PSX
TBA	International Track & Field 2	Konami	PSX
TBA	Jeremy McGrath 2000	THQ	PSX
TBA	Jimmy White's Cueball	Virgin	PSX
TBA	Drakan	GT Interactive	PSX
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	PSX
TBA	This Is Football	SCEE	PSX
TBA	Jeremy McGrath 2000	THQ	PC
TBA	DaiKatana	Eidos	PC
TBA	Messiah	Interplay	PC
TBA	Jeremy McGrath 2000	THQ	CGB
TBA	Street Fighter Alpha	Virgin	CGB
TBA	Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	N64

JANUARY

7th	Space Invaders	Activision	CGB
7th	Take That Bullet	Sega	DC
7th	Um Jammer Lammy	SCEE	PSX

14th	Battlezone	Activision	N64
14th	Force Commander	Activision	PC
14th	Carmageddon Rally	SCI	PC
14th	Harrier Attack	Infogrames	PSX

TBA	Beatmania: European Edition	Konami	PSX
TBA	Resident Evil: Code Veronica	Eidos	DC
TBA	Ready 2 Rumble	Midway	CGB
TBA	Starcraft 64	Nintendo	N64

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A BREEDING NIGHTMARE!

Win a snowboard!

Bag yourself a state-of-the-art snowboard and a copy of PlayStation game *TrickN Snowboarder*.

Arcade, in association with the *Daily Mail Ski and Snowboard Show*, is offering five lucky readers the chance to win one of these fantastic snowboards (pictured below) from those smashing people at Forum. The first prize winner will also get a freezing cold PlayStation with a snow-covered copy of *TrickN Snowboarder* while the four runners up will also each receive a copy of this cool new game from Virgin Interactive.

Forum is one of the real success stories of the snowboarding industry. It put together one of the best teams around to ride its boards and quickly established itself as a notorious and sought-after brand name. Forum's state-of-the-art boards range in size from 146cm to 158cm to suit anyone from the beginner through to the professional hardcore thrasher.

You can check out the Forum gear at the *Daily Mail Ski and Snowboard Show* at London's Olympia from 29 October to 7 November (ticket hotline 0990 900090). The show will be packed with fantastic attractions including a virtual reality mountain, a live freestyle frenzy, a cybercafe, après-ski bars and hundreds of exhibitors showcasing the best in winter holidays, fashion and, of course, snowboards galore.

Alternatively, if you prefer to practise your snowboarding indoors with a roaring fire and a cup of cocoa, then check out *TrickN Snowboarder* from Capcom/Virgin Interactive. The game enables you to perform incredible combos and tricks over ten different courses, including Alpine, the intriguing Halfpipe and the challenging Snowboard Park. As well as a story mode and a fun two-player option, *TrickN Snowboarder* has a "hidden" feature where you can play as Leon, Claire or the Zombie Cop from horror-fest *Resident Evil 2*.

So if you'd like to hit the slopes and kiss the powder with the baddest of boards, just answer the following question, dude.

Which of the following is *not* a recognised snowboarding move?

- a) Inverted Aerial
- b) Backward-Neck 360° Whip
- c) Super G Misty Flip

■ **Yo! Send your answer on a postcard to:**
Arcade/Daily Mail Ski and Snowboard Show
Competition, Arcade, 30 Monmouth Street,
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■ **Two of the five superb Forum snowboards up for grabs.**



THE RULES

- 1 No purchase is necessary.
- 2 No Future Publishing, Virgin Interactive, Forum or Daily Mail employee or their associates may enter this compo.
- 3 The closing date is 31 December 1999.
- 4 The editor's decision is final.
- 5 There is no cash alternative to the competition prizes.
- 6 Absolutely no correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of this competition.
- 7 Individuals may only enter this competition once. And we will spot multiples. So there.

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NINTENDO

"I've always had
an ambition to make
something that would
surprise the world."

Shigeru Miyamoto

Interview by **Rich Pelley**

He's developed more than 60 Nintendo games and he sports a Nintendo T-shirt. If you want to be the best, as Roy Castle sang, dedication's what you need.

You don't get to talk to Shigeru Miyamoto easily. The head of game development at Nintendo in Japan, Shigs (as he isn't known to his friends) has had a hand in every single game developed by Nintendo from the days of the NES, through the SNES and right up to the N64. He's perhaps the most important, and talented, man in the videogaming world. Yet, at the recent ECTS show in London (where Arcade used all its journalistic know-how to get a word with Mr M, where other, lesser magazines were being turned away), The Shigster remained his usual calm, collected self, happy to chat away – even if he didn't initially have a clue what we were talking about...

[Waiting for Shigs to turn up] [To photographer] Um, actually. Do you know what Shigs looks like?

Photographer: Er, that's him. [Pointing to short, scruffy-looking chap in a black Nintendo T-shirt]

[Over-loudly] What him?

Photographer: [Through clenched teeth] Yes.

[Attempts to shake hand. Gets caught up in camera wires, and trips over bag, nearly sending Shigs flying] Er, hello.

[Shigs looks bewildered]

How are you?

[Silence]

Er.

Photographer: He doesn't speak English, you know.

[Painfully slowly] ARE. YOU. HAVING. A. NICE. TIME?

[Shigs looks lost]

Would you like a cup of tea? [Fetches some tea]

[Shigs starts rambling on in Japanese]

Um, are you hot?

Yes! Very hot. [At last, Shigs locates his translator – Yasuhiro Minagawa – and the interview proper starts]

Phew. Hello. Sorry about that. So, how are you handling ECTS?

Well, I have been at the show for all three days, but I've been inside Nintendo's booth being interviewed for most of the time. I had an opportunity to look around once, but I didn't get to see much because people kept stopping me and shaking my hand. A lot of people seemed to want their photo taken with me though, which I enjoyed.

Does it bother you, people constantly swarming around you? Do you realise how famous you are in the videogame industry?

[Sipping tea] I must admit that it surprised me, being recognised in England. [Pauses] I've had similar experiences at game shows held in the US, so I'm usually more prepared when I visit America. But in Japan it's a different story. At the recent Nintendo Space World, I couldn't even step into the show site without being noticed and people coming up to me. However, away from the show sites and out of a videogame environment, I am just an ordinary man.

Apparently, you're a bit of a sex-symbol too. Did you know?

No, don't do that. I know you're kidding.

No, really, you are. Those girls [points to girls in spangly tops] couldn't wait to be in a photo with you. But, anyway. Are you having a nice time?

Yes, I feel a lot of energy and I am really enjoying myself.

Have you been to England before? How's the jet-lag?

Well, although I'm in a different time zone than I would be in Kyoto [where Nintendo HQ is based], London time seems to suit my usual activity pattern quite well. At home in Japan, I tend to work late into the night, so my condition has been pretty good throughout my stay in London this time.

So what do you think of the English culture here?

I've tried to spend as much of the free time I've had visiting museums in London.



- Shigs is 48. Or 49.
- He's quite short.
- He studied industrial design at Kanazawa Municipal Arts & Crafts College in Kyoto, Japan.
- He plays the banjo.
- His first console game, *Super Mario Brothers*, sold over 50 million copies worldwide. Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, released at the same time, sold 47 million.
- He likes to be called Mr Miyamoto.
- He joined Nintendo as company artist in 1977. He bagged the job because his dad was mates with the company's president, Hiroshi Yamauchi.
- He used to set traps linked to the door of his room for his mum when he went to school.
- He describes himself as a quiet and middle-aged man.
- He's got a floppy, pudding basin haircut.
- In 1980 he was chosen by his boss to develop a game – his first. The result was *Donkey Kong*.
- Since then he has designed, directed or produced over 60 games. At any one time, he's typically involved in ten projects.
- To relax at home, Shigs plays *Mario Kart* against his two children.
- What a guy, eh?

When I visited New York last year, I also tried to visit as many museums as my time allowed. I like towns where cultural facilities are abundant.

London is a wonderful environment, surrounded by splendid arts. It makes me quite jealous, actually. As I am getting older, I've started to harbour a bit of an interest in gardening.

Gardening?

Er, yes. I've really enjoyed looking at the pretty plants and flowers around London town. I was a bit wary about English food, though. I was told all kinds of terrible stories before my visit, but luckily none of them have been true and I've been enjoying it. I even got to visit a pub where I ate the famous fish and chips.

Obviously you're very, very good at making videogames. The best in the world, in fact. But have you got any hidden talent for anything else?

Thank you for the compliment. Well, ever since my youth, I've always had an ambition to make something that would surprise the world. When I was in elementary school, I used to make puppets and put on puppet shows. Then in my junior high days, I drew cartoons, and played music in a band. But I realised I wouldn't really be able to become professional in any of those fields. Now I am paying much more attention to the creation of a new surprise.

Really? What sort of surprise?

My plan is to utilise IC, and pursue the possibility of videogames with that perspective.

Eh? IC? What's that? Sounds exciting though. [Motions from some especially official-looking German security-types that we've got time for one more question before Shigs is ushered away] Er, if you were one of the Nintendo characters you've created, which one would you be?

Lakitu in the *Super Mario* series. He seems to be very free, floating in the air, going anywhere. And that's me, that is.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON



■ While everything about Webbie looks pixel-perfect, she clearly has little say in what she wears.



Elite Model **Webbie Tookay**She's
electric

Is your videogame-addled mind having problems sorting fact from fiction? Webbie Tookay isn't going to help.

Many red-blooded males would jump at the chance to go on a dream date with Claudia Schiffer or Cindy Crawford. Or Yasmin Le Bon, Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell, Elle Macpherson, Caprice, or even that one with the nice assets out of the Wonderbra advert.

But, of course, unless you're a nasally-endowed magician, wrinkly-old hamster fan, tall '80s popster with a mean *Reflex*, or you manage to fulfil an equally unlikely set of other highly-specific credentials, the chances of your ever getting anywhere near The Body, The Waif or any other supermodel are as slim as the women themselves.

However, the likelihood of your busting a move with Webbie Tookay is even sligher. She may be the latest supermodel on everyone else's (but – as we've established – not your) lips, but like all the Virtual Foxes we've featured in *Arcade* the snag is that *she doesn't exist*.

Webbie, you see, has been created by Swedish 3D artist Steven Ståhlberg, at Illusion2k – a \$1 million new business division of modelling agency Elite Models. Her vital statistics have been set by Elite chairman and founder John Casablancas, who, after signing Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista, Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell and Claudia Schiffer, must know a thing or two about the ins – and all-important outs – of the female form.

The idea was to create a virtual supermodel for the year 2000. A combination of projection units and polarised glasses donned by the fashion cognoscenti will enable Webbie to appear to walk along real catwalks modelling the latest garb and intermingle with models in the flesh. And it doesn't stop there. Webbie is to host her own Web site – Webbie's World – star in her own TV programme (in the States, at least), and is likely to be snapped up for movie promotions and advertising campaigns before you can say "Lara Croft drank my Lucozade".

So is this the end for supermodels as we know them? Probably not. But Webbie's likely success and the introduction of an entire agency of new virtual models for the year 2000 might just be enough to put the heebies, if not the jeebies, up the women who, until the computer world got a look in, were deemed super-perfect.

■ You can find out more about Webbie and her virtual life at <http://www.illusion2k.com>

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: CORBIS/BETTMANN



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Birthplace: France
Star Sign: Scorpio
Fur Colour: White
Favourite Food: Lobster
Hobby: Go Go Dancing
Secret Shame:
Not a natural blonde
Strength: 50
Speed: 50



WARNING: PLAGUE FROM OUTER SPACE

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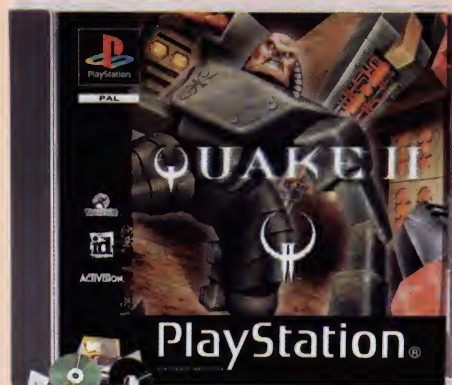
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NOW PLAYING IN THE SHOPS THIS MONTH

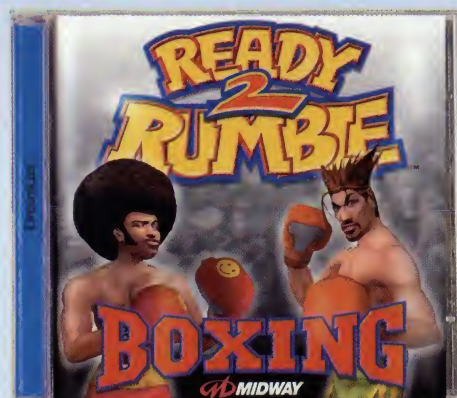
There's more to life than videogames, you know. And by the same token, there's more to videogames than simply the box they come in. Which is why here at *Arcade* we like to pull on a pair of rubber gloves and delve that little bit deeper into the world behind the games we've been playing recently. Oh yes.

P42 QUAKE II



■ You've played *Quake II* on the small screen. Now take it one step further, and play it for real, with the *Arcade*-endorsed rules of Real Life Quake. Dressing up: optional. Looking a complete fool: obligatory.

P44 READY 2 RUMBLE



■ Michael "Let's Get Ready To Rumble" Buffer is to boxing what Murray Walker is to Formula 1 and John Motson is to football. *Arcade* meets the man behind the catchphrase and put a face to the *Ready 2 Rumble*-featured voice of boxing.



P46 POKÉMON



■ They're slippery devils, these Pokémon fellows. *Arcade* puts down its Game Boy for a second and commits to paper the weirder of the *Pokémon* moments you are likely to encounter on your creature-collecting travels.



■ **NOW PLAYING:** *Quake II* – It's all very well taking out your mates in a computer-based multi-player, but how to keep order in real life?



NOW PLAYING IN THE SHOPS THIS MONTH **QUAKE II**

Format: **PlayStation** | Publisher: **Activision** | Developer: **Hammerhead** | Price: **£40** | Release date: **on sale now** | Players: **1-4** | Score: ★★★★★



■ A bit of good old fashioned battling.



■ Computer-generated nonsense.



WHAT'S **QUAKE II** ALL ABOUT?

■ Shooting people, that's what. Up to four can play with a multi tap. And it's the biggest, most fantastic game of cat and mouse since *Itchy and Scratchy* met *Tom and Jerry*. More frantic than the N64's *GoldenEye*, *Quake II* relies more on speed and super-quick reflexes than the tactical manoeuvrability of the Bond licence, but homes in on just the right element of the human psyche that ensures every single game leaves you dripping with sweat – if not on the outside, then certainly on the inside. The original PC version was a huge hit, as was the N64 version, and you can now read *Arcade's* review of the PlayStation version on page 72.

PLAYING FOR REAL

Quakers! It's time to tool up and get out there...

Anyone with any friends knows full well that you can't beat the feeling of running around an enclosed playing area shooting them to bits. Since *Doom*, videogames developers have discovered the perfect way to do this: display the playing area through the first person; turn the fiendishness of the level design up to 11; pepper the floors with more weapons than you can shake a motion-sensitive grenade at and ensure plenty of mano-a-mano action via the deathmatch mode.

The essential formula hasn't changed for *Quake II* on PlayStation. But for real-life shooting shenanigans, your options are disappointing: paintballing or kids' birthday favourite Quasar. But when has running around The Forest of Dean with a group of hairy men thrown out of the Territorial Army for being trigger happy, or being roughly manhandled by a gaggle of over-enthusiastic youths and repetitively shot at by a fat wheezy kid post-hanging in the corner ever been anything like any videogame you've played?

What you need, therefore, are the official, Arcade-endorsed rules...

Real Life Quake

(c) *Arcade Magazine* 1999

The Rules

1. Any number of people can play.
2. The winner is the person who manages to shoot the others most.
3. The winner is decided arbitrarily at the end of the game – by the person who reckons they've won.
4. Games last until everyone gets bored, arrested or hungry.
5. Protective clothing must be worn.
6. The boundaries of the playing arena must be specified before play commences, for example "anywhere other than Mum and Dad's bedroom".
7. Due consideration must be given to other people who enter the play area, but are not involved in the game.
8. Weapons. In any real-life gun-based event – for example, the Second World War, paintballing, or the *Terminator* films – people carry one weapon at a time. Never does the central character hulk around a huge weapons rucksack. Yet in *Quake* you're able to swap between an entire arsenal of firepower, at will.

Which begs the question: how are you able to negotiate your way around these difficult arenas carrying so much gear? And how come when you line another player up in your sights, you can't identify their weapons? For *Real Life Quake*, any manner of weapons can be used,

AND THERE'S MORE



■ But what of the power-ups? The obvious emphasis in *Quake II* may well be on the acquisition and utilisation of bigger and better weapons, but the discerning player will know to make the most of the two main power-ups – Quad Damage and The Pentagon of Protection – whenever he or she finds them.

An old curtain or tablecloth may be draped over the shoulders, cape-style, to mimic the invincibility of the Pentagon of Protection, the "power-up" lasting until another player can yank it away. Quad Damage takes a little more organising, requiring the individual player to enlist the help of three extra friends to hold down the target as you empty your Ranger X 1000 all over them.

but the emphasis must remain on safety. Water pistols, Nerf guns, paintball pea-shooters, bows and arrows with suckers on the end are fine. As are squeeze bottles of ketchup. Air rifles, BB guns, starting pistols are out. As are real weapons. The only criteria is that you must be able to carry them all in your hands or in your belt.

9. An average human's field of vision is slightly less than 180°. Yet due to the 2D nature of the TV screen, in *Quake* your vision is limited straight ahead. Which is why you have to constantly use the view buttons.

So, to mimic this effect, in *Real Life Quake* your world view must be blinkered accordingly – by Sellotaping two toilet rolls to your eyes.

10 The above rules laid down, make up the rest as you go.



♦♦ Read our *Quake II* review on page 72.

WHAT YOU NEED

So, to recap. Here's what you need to enjoy Real Life Quake.

■ Protective headwear

You've only got one bounce. Make sure you look after it.

■ Visual impediments

View the world not through rose-tinted spectacles, but through some old toilet rolls or cups instead.

■ Suitable clothing

To distinguish you from the other players and the general public. And to keep your clothes underneath Persil Clean.

■ Main weapon

Recommended: Ranger X 1000 pump-action water pistol. Plus water.

■ Secondary weapons

Water pistols, bow and arrows, tomato ketchup. So long as you can stuff it into your belt.

■ Trousers

'Cos you'll definitely get arrested if you don't wear these.

■ Smart bombs

Eggs'll do nicely.

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: NEIL GOWMAN



■ **NOW PLAYING:** *Ready 2 Rumble* – Punch drunk madness that'll have you nursing aching ribs for days afterwards. It's that funny.



**NOW PLAYING
IN THE SHOPS THIS MONTH**

READY 2 RUMBLE

Format: **Dreamcast** | Developer: **Midway** | Publisher: **Midway** | Price: **£40** | Release date: **on sale now** | Players: **1-2** | ★★★★★

■ **Michael Buffer gets animated before a Ready 2 Rumble bout.**



BOXING CLEVER

Fight fans, big bank balances and PJ & Duncan.

Brucie's is "Nice to see you". Paul Daniels' is "Now, that's magic". And Michael Buffer's is "Let's get ready to rumble" – the most identifiable catchphrase in American sport. Attend any major sporting event Stateside and you're likely to experience Buffer's legendary crowd-working techniques, culminating in his famous catchphrase. However, his first sport is boxing and Buffer has recently been working with Prince Naseem as ringside announcer.

In light of this it made perfect sense for Midway to sign Buffer up

for its superb comedy take on pugilism and name the game after his catchphrase. Ladies and gentlemen, let's get ready to, um, interview.

How did you get into sports announcing?

As a kid I was always captivated by how the announcers turned a sporting match into a real event. I started going to boxing matches as a fan, but the ticket prices were so expensive, I figured if I became an announcer, I'd get a good seat.

Why "Let's get ready to rumble"?

I soon realised I needed a line to get the crowd excited. At races, the

announcer would say "Gentlemen, start your engines" and everybody would go nuts because what that phrase really means is, now all the bull, all the hype and all the nonsense stops and the real stuff begins. I tried "Fasten your seatbelts". I tried "Man your battlestations" but it wasn't quite working. Then I remembered Mohammed Ali staging these weigh-ins as a young fighter. When he was asked about the fight, he'd say "I'm looking pretty, I'm ready to rumble!"

Do you ever tire of saying it?

No, because I love creating excitement. And there are so many licensing agreements dependent on that catchphrase, it's hard to get tired of going to the bank!

Give us a lesson in crowd motivation.

You've got to introduce the build-up. Be firm. "Ladies and gentleman, are you ready?" Wait for the lull, and go in harder. "Are you rrrrready?" When you've got their attention, drop your voice down and talk faster. "Wearing the blue shorts, the defending champion, hailing from Washington, District of Columbia..." Drag out the spiel and increase the volume. By then you've got the crowd in the palm of your hand and when you pause, you can hear a pin drop. That's the moment I love, the anticipation. Then, like a train leaving the station, you hit 'em with it.

What do you think of the videogame?

I love it. It's A-one. I was nervous about appearing in the game at first as I'm fairly ignorant about these things, but *Ready 2 Rumble* is a great videogame. It's easy to pick up, but there's a lot of complexity there. It captures the movement, the excitement and the fun of boxing.

Have you heard of PJ & Duncan?

[Laughs] I own the trademark *Ready to Rumble* and we usually pursue all trademark infringements, but I heard their song and decided it wasn't worth the bother!



WHAT'S READY 2 RUMBLE ALL ABOUT?

■ It's simply one of the funniest, most immediate and addictive games around. Dreamcast's graphical power has enabled Midway to develop a wonderful half-realistic/half-cartoon style for its fighters, who move with astounding fluidity and display an amusing range of facial expressions. From bitchin' disco groover Afro Thunder to all-English '30s throwback "Big" Willie Johnson, never has a fighting game boasted such a distinct array of lunatic characters.

Ready 2 Rumble cocks a snook at the Queensbury rules and opts instead for extravagant punches and hilarious combos. With so many basic moves available, plus a number of special moves unique to each fighter, *Ready 2 Rumble*'s status as a post-pub favourite looks assured.

AND THERE'S MORE



■ Michael Buffer's announcing skills are in evidence as he attempts to get the often unenthusiastic in-game crowd (booing and slow handclaps a speciality) excited about each fighter. As you unlock the additional fighters, he can barely suppress his emotions upon introducing them to the ring. For the devilish final secret fighter, Buffer reduces his voice to an awed whisper before giving vent to a verbal volcano for "the impregnable, the unholy, the other-worldly Damien Black!" Awesome.

TOP TIPS!

Sic 'em, champ.

1. Until you become king of the special moves, be cautious. Try to land big punches and then immediately block or step away from your opponent, as a big swing will leave you open to quick jab attacks (conversely, if an opponent is swinging big at you, hit him with a few rapid jabs). The advantage of hitting big is that you light up Rumble letters.

2. Once all Rumble letters are lit, you can activate Rumble mode

by holding down the two trigger buttons. Use it wisely – if your opponent is about to fall anyway, save it.

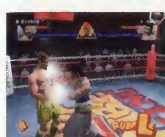
3. In Rumble mode, your punches are more effective and you can pull off special Rumble mode moves. All fighters can activate the Rumble Flurry by hammering A+B – this is a rapid combination of hits, topped off with a super-hard punch. The Flurry is difficult – although not impossible – to block and the best

defence is to leg it. In fact, as soon as an opponent enters Rumble mode, the best policy is to back off. The effect wears off after 15 seconds and if you can avoid being hit, you're doing a good job.

4. For a more effective recovery, hammer buttons or rotate the analogue stick while on the floor. Sneakily, you can also boost your energy level slightly in this way while your opponent is recovering from your battering.



■ **Looks like your man is...**



■ **...Rrrready to Rrrrumble! Ouch.**

GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE



Ducking and diving

■ Recreate the classic boxing scene from *Rising Damp: The Movie* and do a "Rigsby" – dance around the ring, bob, weave, block and cover – up, but don't land a single punch. As defence and evasion are important skills to master, you should be

able to fend off most attacks – although your coach won't like it. Use the Easy setting on Arcade mode with the three knockout default – give yourself a point for each taunt (using either X+A or Y+B) and see how many you can score before you're ground down.

■ **Michael Buffer: the smoothest tan in boxing.**



■ **NOW PLAYING:** *Pokémon* –
The eager young boy sending his
cute rabby thing into battle is
only the beginning of this game's
glorious weirdness.





Feeling peckish?

Man cannot live on bread alone – he needs the odd game.

Gary Glitter once opened a sandwich bar where you could order sarnies called things like "ham on, ham on". Which is, of course, hilarious. But what if Arcade was to open a restaurant? What would be on the menu?

1 Toad in the hole

A massive sausage that is shrivelled at both ends, covered in batter. And some mushrooms, to link in with the confusingly-named, warty backed but adept cornerer from Mario Kart.

2 Lara's Melons

Small ones are more juicy? Not here. Once you've scooped out the succulent innards and nibbled the cherry of only the juiciest of cantaloups, you'll be lucky if you have any appetite left for the main course.

Top ten

Top ten rejected Pokémon slogans.

- 1 Educational and fun!
- 2 Things! Just! Got! Interesting!
- 3 Gotta kill 'em all!
- 4 Cocaine for kids!
- 5 Nintendo profits bonanza!
- 6 Better than sex!
- 7 150 little shits!
- 8 Illin' man!
- 9 Cuddly freak marathon!
- 10 Worse than an ice cream headache.

3 Rack of Um Jammer Lamb

A full rack of only the youngest lamb ribs, slow roasted whilst still alive over a roaring fire, and served with Chop Chop Master Onion sauce. And fries.

4 Garlic Worms

Well, they eat them in France, don't they?

5 Virtual Bass

A large, continental, Fawlty Towers of a Waldorf salad, complete with lettuce, celery, walnuts and something else. With a slice of lemon, Tartar sauce, and a big gap for the fish that you would have got if you'd managed to catch one in Get Bass.

6 Bandicoot Burger

Beef, bison, wild boar, ostrich? Thought you'd tried them all? Then sink your teeth into only the juiciest

quarter pound of (at least 4%) fresh Bandicoot meat, topped with cheese, in a big bun with some salad and a glob of indescribable gloop that you can scoop out if you don't like it.

7 Ape Escape soup

Cooked up from an ancient ebola-encouraging recipe, Ape Escape soup includes fresh, zoo-snatched ingredients. But fret not, none of the primate parts used in this dish have been wasted – elsewhere on the menu expect chimp brain risotto and deep fried Cheetah knuckle crunchies. Ungawa!

8 South Park & Kidney Pie

Contains bollocks. Like the game.

9 Sonic the Hedgehog flavoured crisps

Looking for an appetiser? Then why not try these infamous "hedgehog" flavoured crisps? Don't worry, they don't contain any real hedgehogs! Just more Es than a summer in the Balearic Islands.

10 GoldenEye

A sheep's eye marinated in honey and deep fried until golden brown. Delicious is probably not the word.

Guest Chart

Top ten old wives' tales

Your mum knows best. Or does she?



■ "I knew I shouldn't have necked that tab before bedtime."

1 If you eat cheese before you go to bed, it gives you nightmares.

Unlikely, unless you take a massive wedge to bed and it lodges through your pyjama bottoms in the middle of the night.

2 If you pull that face and the wind changes, you'll be stuck like that.

Perhaps if you mum hadn't pulled a face when the wind changed when she was younger, she wouldn't have been stuck with such an overweight alcoholic as your dad.

3 If you go out in the rain without a coat, you'll get a cold.

No. All colds are viruses, and the only way to fight them off is to build up the antibodies in your bloodstream – by catching the cold in the first place. Hence why there is no true cure or prevention. Getting a chill may lower your defence mechanism and make you feel worse, but it won't give you the flu. Duh.

4 If you spill some red wine, use white wine to clean it up.

Except a bottle of Vanish is about ten times more effective.

and milk is alkaline. But by the time it gets into your stomach – which is itself highly acidic, it won't make much difference. Mind you, don't drink orange juice after cleaning your teeth, 'cos it tastes nasty.

6 If you eat the crust of your bread, it makes your hair curl.

As shown by Brian "doorstep sandwich" May, out of Queen. And Leo "four slices of toast for me, please" Sayer.

7 Sucking ice cubes cures hiccups.

As does holding your breath, drinking a glass of water "backwards" or standing on your head.



■ Eat these to see in the dark whilst having nightmares.

8 If you carry on doing that, it'll make you go blind.

And give you hairy palms. Sticky, more like.

9 Eating carrots lets you see in the dark.

So does a torch.

10 Your own urine can be used as an antiseptic.

True, apparently.



■ "Gauche? No, it's Ralph Lauren..."

CHART ANALYSIS

With the Arcade Baywatch lifeguard extra geezer.

■ Hi, there. When I'm not diving elaborately into the sea or milling around at the back to make up the numbers, there's nothing I like better than playing videogames. Which makes me, I hope, the ideal person to talk about this month's charts. *Pokémon Red* and *Pokémon Blue* riding as high as Pamela Anderson's breasts, for example. Not that she's in *Baywatch* any more, of course. Or is she? The ITV scheduling forever confuses me. As does the re-entry of *South Park* at number 7, a game as piss-poor as David Hasselhoff's acting. Anyway, I'm off for bit of a *Baywatch* myself now, if you know what I mean. See ya.

Vox pops

At games trade show ECTS



■ Hello! You look a bit like Jamie Theakston. "Eh?" You know, off *The O-Zone*. And *Live & Kicking*. "Zorry, I am, 'ow you say, French". Not to worry. Do you think that *Pokémon* is going to be as popular as *Tamagotchi*? "Eh?" *Poke-é-mon*? The game you were just playing? "I am not understanding." Never mind. Au revoir.



■ Hello. What's that you're playing with? "It's a Pocket Neo Geo". Whasthatthen? "It's a bit like a Game Boy, but better. Have a go on *Pocket Tennis*." It looks a bit like a Spectrum. "No, I'm telling you mate, these things are going to take off like hot cakes." Airborne buns, eh? When's it out? "Christmas" Okay. Thanks. Bye.

Import zone

With Department 1 (0171 916 8440)



■ As strong as a woman.

■ Hello. Time for our monthly call to "Bonkers" Andy from Department 1. [ring ring, ring ring] "Hello. Department 1. "Bonkers" Andy, here." Hi, Andy. What's new? "*Soul Calibur*. People are going insane for it. In all my years in the business, I've never seen the public go so bonkers." There's a surprise. "American Dreamcasts are selling like hot American Dreamcasts too, because of the increased frame rate." And what do you think of that? "Bonkers". Thought so. Next month, then? Bye.

Official Top 40

In special double-reverse order.



1 (-) Star Wars: Phantom Menace

■ PSX PC ■ LucasArts

Eh? What are you doing? It may be the official licence, but the PlayStation version is an utter pile of pants. Don't believe the hype.

2 (2) Driver

■ PSX PC ■ GT Interactive

Cruising along happily in second place, *Driver* is far more like it.



3 (-) Pokémon Red

■ GGB ■ Nintendo

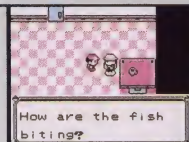
The phenomenon is here. Believe us, even you'll be hooked by Christmas.



4 (-) Pokémon Blue

■ GBC ■ Nintendo

The other game you'll need to link-up with *Pokémon Red* for full *Pokémon* satisfaction.



5 (-) Tony Hawk's Skateboarding

■ PSX ■ Activision

He may be in his thirties, but *Tony* can still pull off a mean indy nosebone when he wants to.



6 (-) Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun

■ PC ■ Electronic Arts

The Nth *Command & Conquer* game, but the best to date.



7 (-) South Park

■ PSX N64 PC ■ Acclaim

New for the PSX, but still retains the original problem: it's crap.



8 (-) Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

■ PSX PC ■ Eidos

And not *Soul Weaver* as someone round here mistakenly thought it.



9 (-) Tekken 3

■ PSX ■ Namco (budget)

The king of the beat-'em-ups at a price even Asda would like.



10 (5) Colin McRae Rally

■ PSX PC ■ Codemasters (budget)

You know. The bloke off the Ford Focus ad.



11 (-) X-Files

■ PSX ■ Sony

12 (4) Gran Turismo

■ PSX ■ Sony

12 (-) FA Premier League Stars

■ PSX PC ■ EA

14 (-) Resident Evil 2

■ PSX PC ■ Virgin (budget)

15 (-) Wipeout 3

■ PSX ■ Sony

14 (-) WWF Attitude

■ PSX N64 CGB ■ Acclaim

11 (-) Crash Bandicoot 2

■ PSX ■ Sony (budget)

18 (9) Tomb Raider 2

■ PSX PC ■ Eidos (budget)

18 (3) Abe's Exoddus

■ PSX PC ■ GT (budget)

20 (-) Homeworld

■ PC ■ Sierra

21 (19) Croc 2

■ PSX ■ Fox Interactive

22 (5) Syphon Filter

■ PSX ■ Sony

29 (7) Silent Hill

■ PSX ■ Konami

28 (14) Final Fantasy VII

■ PSX PC ■ Sony /Eidos (budget)

25 (15) Tomb Raider 3

■ PSX PC ■ Eidos

38 (28) Grand Theft Auto

■ PSX PC ■ Take 2 (budget)

27 (16) Championship Manager 3

■ PC ■ Eidos

28 (-) Mario Golf

■ N64 ■ Nintendo

29 (-) Time Crisis

■ PSX ■ Sony (budget)

30 (32) Croc

■ PSX PC ■ EA (budget)

31 (-) Medieval

■ PSX ■ Sony (platinum)

32 (-) Point Blank 2

■ PSX ■ Sony

33 (-) X: Beyond The Frontier

■ PSX ■ THQ

34 (-) System Shock 2

■ PC ■ Electronic Arts

35 (-) Tiger Woods 99

■ PSX PC ■ EA Sports

36 (34) A Bug's Life

■ PSX PC CGB ■ Activision/Sony/Disney

37 (26) FIFA '99

■ PSX PC N64 ■ EA Sports

38 (28) Rayman

■ PSX PC ■ Ubisoft (budget)

39 (18) Worms

■ PSX PC CGB MAC ■ Infogrames

40 (35) Hercules

■ PSX PC ■ Disney

JAPANESE TOP 10



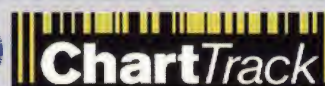
- 1 (-) **Bio Hazard 3 - Last Escape**
PSX, Capcom
- 2 (-) **Dragon Quest 1 & 2**
GB, PSX
- 3 (-) **Dragon Quest Characters - Toruneko's Big Adventure 2**
PSX, Chun Soft/Enix
- 4 (-) **Jikkyou World Soccer Winning Eleven**
PSX, Konami
- 5 (-) **Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Remix**
PSX, Konami
- 6 (-) **Winning Post 4**
PSX, Koei
- 7 (-) **Accompaniment Anywhere**
PSX, SCE
- 8 (2) **Everybody's Golf 2**
PSX, SCE
- 9 (-) **Beat Mania Append 4th Mix - The beat goes on**
PSX, Konami
- 10 (5) **Jikkyou Powerful Pro Baseball '99**
PSX, Konami

US CONSOLE TOP 10



- 1 (-) **WWF Attitude**
PSX, Acclaim
- 2 (-) **Pokémon Snap**
N64, Nintendo
- 3 (-) **Madden NFL 2000**
PSX, Electronic Arts
- 4 (2) **Pokémon Blue**
GB, Nintendo
- 5 (3) **Pokémon Red**
GB, Nintendo
- 6 (7) **Pokémon Pinball**
GB, Nintendo
- 7 (-) **Driver**
PSX, GT Interactive
- 8 (-) **NFL GameDay 2000**
PSX, 989 Studios
- 9 (-) **NCAA Football 2000**
PSX, Electronic Arts
- 10 (-) **Legacy of Kain 2: Soul Reaver**
PSX, Eidos

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON



PlayStation2

Words by | **Sean Atkins & Jamie Sefton**

The guesswork is over, the speculation can finally cease; PlayStation2 – the most powerful and eagerly anticipated games machine ever – has at last been unveiled in Tokyo and Arcade was first in line for a play on the beauty. Can any machine possibly live up to such extreme levels of hype?

ONLY TWO PAD PORTS

■ Gamers have been unanimously disappointed with Sony's decision to have only two ports as standard, although the company has stated that the PlayStation multitap will work with the new console.

USB PORTS

■ All the extra ports will allow for future hardware expansions. These include a combined Ethernet and hard-drive pack, due to arrive in 2001, that will enable PlayStation2 to download movies on demand, access PlayStation software libraries and a host of other facilities.

I.LINK PORT

■ A video-in to allow future features such as the ability to add your face or custom textures to videogames.

DUAL SHOCK 2

■ The new controller is "space black" with subtle glitter thrown into the mix. It's fully analogue, with pressure-sensitive buttons that provide 256 levels of velocity data with each press. Could revolutionise the way you play games.

8MB MEMORY CARD

■ Provides 64 times the capacity (a quarter of the *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* cartridge) and 256 times the speed of the old PlayStation cards.

The look of Sony's PlayStation sequel may be controversial – a pretty even 50/50 split of love it/hate it swept the Net as the first pictures appeared last month – but the sheer power, ambition and possibilities of the super console left everyone who attended the official unveiling in Tokyo gobsmacked. *Arcade* was there.

Walking around the mind-numbing sensory overload that was the Tokyo Game Show, you would have noticed a substantial bright neon-adorned display area for the Sega Dreamcast. Impressive though it was, visitors were mostly interested in the part of the show littered with numerous perspex boxes containing a new games console – Sony's PlayStation2.

PlayStation2 is slightly larger than its predecessor and deliberately resembles a piece of hi-tech gear such

The future starts here



BLUE DISC

■ PlayStation2 discs will be blue for CD-ROMs and silver for DVD-ROMs. DVD movies are playable, as are the original PlayStation black discs.

PLASTIC STAND

■ If for some reason you wish to have your new Sony console standing on its end, you can use this optional bit of coloured plastic to keep everything nice and vertical.

PLAYSTATION LOGO

■ The plastic logo on the drive door can be rotated so it always faces upwards. Sony has obviously considered every stage of design with incredible attention to detail.

■ The horizontal charms of PlayStation2.



as a VCR or CD player, rather than a traditional games machine. The designer of the original PlayStation, Sony hardware guru Mr Goto, apparently made the PlayStation2 a mirror of the universe: the black box represents space while the blue and purple base is a metaphor for Earth.

The new black 'n' glitter DualShock2 analogue controller could have huge implications for future games. With 256 levels of velocity data you could, for example, have an incredibly sensitive fighting game where you vary the weight and style of every punch via pressure on a single button.

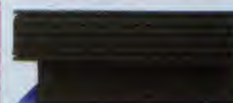
PlayStation2 discs will be silver for DVD-ROMs or blue for CD-ROMs, with the addition of DVD movies and the original PlayStation's black discs. Although there won't be any graphics improvement playing PlayStation games on the new console, Sony has released development libraries that will enable PlayStation games being released now to take advantage of the faster 24X CD-ROM drive (the original platform has a 2X drive).

There's no modem with the unit, as the company is concentrating on the next-generation of online technology. According to Sony exec Phil Harrison: "Our long-term strategy... is broadband. We're basically leap-frogging today's Internet." An Ethernet and hard-drive expansion has been slated for a 2001 release, promising Net surfing and the downloading of movies and games at a speed far exceeding today's modems.

Sony put on a great demonstration at the show, wowing the expectant crowds with a bullish display of hardware features, graphical wizardry and rolling demos of the top PlayStation2 titles. After that there was only one thing left to do – play.

Revolutionary good looks

Will one of these take pride of place in your sitting room come next Christmas?



When standing: top view
When flat: end view



When standing: side view
(When flat: underside)



When standing: back
(When flat: back view)



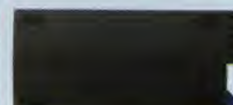
When standing: side view
(When flat: top view)



When standing: front
(When flat: front)



■ Sony dominated Tokyo Game Show.



When standing: bottom view
(When flat: end view)

PlayStation2 Fact-o-meter

■ **Release date:** 4 March 2000 (Japan) Autumn 2000 (Europe)

■ **Price:** ¥39,800 (£230)

■ **Dimensions:** 301mm (W) X 178mm (D) X 78mm (H) at 2.1kg

■ **CPU:** 128-bit "Emotion Engine" 294.912 Mhz

■ **Memory:** 32 Mb

■ **Graphics:** "Graphics Synthesizer" Chip 147.456 Mhz

■ **VRAM:** 4Mb

■ **Disc drive:** 24x CD-ROM drive, 4x DVD-ROM drive

■ **Sound:** 48ch voices, 2MB sound memory

■ **Accessories included:** Dual Shock2 analogue controller, 8Mb memory card, PlayStation2 demo disc, AV multi cable, AC

power cord

■ **Interfaces:** Controller port (2), memory card slot (2), AV multicable output, optical digital output, USB port (2), i.Link (IEEE1394), Type III PCMCIA card slot

PLAYSTATION TOOL

■ Sony also unveiled the PlayStation2 development hardware. The hefty PlayStation Tool workstation is a wallet-busting ¥2,000,000 (£11,760) and is required to produce software and graphics for the new console.



I SHALL CALL HIM... DVD!

■ There's no doubt that the future is DVD. Sony had a separate stand showing the PlayStation2 playing the latest DVD movies, and all the new software will be on this format – *Gran Turismo 2000* comes in a DVD-style case. Nintendo has abandoned its beloved cartridges in favour of DVD to encourage more developers to produce games for the new Dolphin console while Sega is planning a DVD add-on for the Dreamcast.



■ GT2000: DVD-style packaging.

■ PlayStation2 had its converts.



The Games

There are an enormous number of games already in development for the launch next year, although how many of these will actually be finished in time isn't clear. *Dark Cloud* and *The Bouncer* were the most impressive titles by far, using the power of the PlayStation2 in a ground-breaking way.



■ *Dark Cloud*: enter a world of your own making.

Dark Cloud

An amazing God-game-meets-RPG which enables you to create forests and houses in 2D *Sim City*-style, but then sees your character to zoom into the world you've just created and walk around it in stunning 3D.

Frame by frame



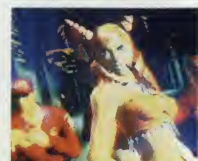
■ Having decided what will go where, you zoom in and explore the environment.

■ PlayStation2 game in music video shocker.



The Bouncer

A free-roaming 3D fighting game with characters that can interact fully with their environment, such as a scene where the hero hurdles a turnstile, beats up a few guards and hops onto a speeding train.



Frame by frame



■ High speed fare dodging, turnstile-hopping action in *The Bouncer*.



■ "I'll get my coat."



Frame by frame

■ Namco put this version of *Tekken Tag* together in three weeks.



Tekken Tag

This was sharp and as quick as the coin-op, but some of the backgrounds slipped up to reveal a form of parallax scrolling once in a while. However, Namco claims to have only spent three weeks developing the version *Arcade* played.



IF GAMING IS
YOUR WORLD,
IT'S BEST YOU
STAY AT HOME

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GAMES DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

■ So, where are the ridges?

New Ridge Racer

The latest Namco driving extravaganza. It wasn't playable at the show, but looked incredible with gorgeous smooth-as-silk graphics and stunning backgrounds.

Frame by frame



■ This wasn't playable, but whetted the appetite.



Gran Turismo 2000

Sony's flagship racer looked good, with incredibly shiny cars and environmental effects such as heat haze. Although it played similarly to the original, there was obviously still a lot of work to do on the detail of the tracks.

Frame by frame



■ These babies even pollute in virtual reality.

THAT GAMES LINE UP IN FULL

■ PlayStation2 boasts the most impressive games development line up in console launch history. Sony announced at the Tokyo Game Show that 77 games were in development and the list goes a little like this.

Game	Developer	Genre
1 On 1 Government	Jorudan	Action
3D Golf	T&E Soft	Sports
3D Real Drive	VR-1 Japan	Racer
500GP	Namco	Racer
AI Mahjong 2001	i4 Corp.	Mahjong
American Arcade	Astroll	Pinball
Armoured Core 2	From Software	Action
A-Train 6	Artdink	Sim
Bakurya 2	Fujimic	Sports
Battle On		
The Gnat	Ecseco	Racer
Baki The Grappler	Tomy	Sports
BBD2000	Enix	Sim
Billiard Master 2	Ask	Sports
Bloody Roar 3	Hudson Soft	Fighter
Boku To Mauh	SCEI	RPG
Bomberman 2001	Hudson Soft	Action
Bust-A-Move 3	Enix	Dancer
Catch Bass Club	Magical Co. Ltd.	Sports
Choro Q HG	Takara	Racer
Dark Cloud	Sony	RPG
Der-Sen	SCEI	Action
Drum Mania	Konami	Drummer
Eternal Ring	From Software	RPG
Exotica	Enix	RPG
F-1	Video System	Racer
Fantavision	SCEI	Action
Fighting Illusion		
K-1 Grand Prix	Xing	Sports
Fighting QTs	Enix	Mystery
Flower Sun & Rain	ASCII	Adventure
Fly High	Gust	Racer
FX Pilot	Locus	Shooter
Gradius III & IV	Konami	Sports
GT 2000	Polyphony/SCEI	Racer
IQ Remix	SCEI	Puzzler
Jade Cocoon 2	Genki	RPG
Jikkou World		
Soccer 2000	Konami	Sports
Kessen	Koei	Sim
Koshien 2000	Magical Co. Ltd.	Sports
Let's Become		
A Pilot 2!	Victor Interactive	Sim
Mahjong Taikai III	Koei	Mahjong
Mahjong Yarouze 2	Konami	Mahjong
Mobile Suit		
Gundam	Bandai	Action
Morita Shougi	Yuki	Mystery
New Cool Boarders	UEP Systems	Sports
New Ridge Racer	Namco	Racer
Ninja Gaiden	Tecmo	Action
Onimusha	Capcom	Mystery
Panic Surfing	ASCII	Sports
Panzer Century		
G Breaker	Sunrise	Sim
Go By Train!	Taito	Sim
Perfect Golf 3	Seta	Sports
Poplocrois III	SCEI	RPG
ProGolf	Magical Co. Ltd.	Sports
Pro Mahjong	Athena	Mahjong
Roadsters		
Trophy 2000	Titus	Racer
Robocop	Titus	Action
Shin-		
Sangokumusou	Koei	Action
Shanghai 5	Sun	Puzzler
Sidewinder Max	Asmik Ace Ent.	Shooter
Sky Surfer	Idea Factory	Sports
Soldnerschild 2	Koei	RPG
Sonnette	Enix	Love
Soul Surfing	Warashi	Action
Splash Dive	SCEI	Action
Star Ocean 3	Enix	RPG
Street Fighter EX3	Capcom	Fighter
Street Mahjong		
Trance Majin 2	Sun	Mahjong
Tekken Tag		
Tournament	Namco	Fighter
Tendhu 2	SCEI	Action
Tetsuman		
Menkyokaiden	Kaga Tech	Mystery
The Bouncer	Square	Action
Tuning Car		
Race Game	MTO	Racer
Unison	Tecmo	Action
Wild Wild Racing	Imagineer	Racer
World Neverland 3	Riverhill Soft	Sim
WRC	Spike	Racer
X-Fire	EA/Square	Action



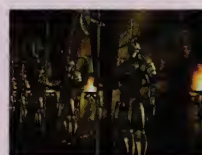
■ American Arcade



■ A-Train 6



■ Billiard Master 2



■ Eternal Ring



■ Kessen



■ Poplocrois III



■ Sky Surfer



■ Splash Dive



■ Unison



■ Wild Wild Racing

THUMB LEFT, THUMB RIGHT, THUMB LEFT, THUMB RIGHT,
THUMB LEFT, THUMB RIGHT, THUMB LEFT, THUMB RIGHT,
THUMB LEFT, THUMB RIGHT, THUMB LEFT, THUMB RIGHT,
THUMB DOWN, THUMB UP, THUMB DOWN, THUMB UP,
THUMB DOWN, THUMB UP, THUMB DOWN, THUMB UP,
THUMB DOWN, THUMB UP, THUMB DOWN, THUMB UP...

[LIBERATION!]



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FOR PRECISION GAMING PERFORMANCE WITH AN INSTANT RESPONSE. AIRPAD IS FULLY PROGRAMMABLE TOO, WHILE THE
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GAME PLAY AT FULL TILT



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STORES FROM
OCTOBER

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EUROPE



For Sony Play Station®





NAVAL GAZING

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB SCOTT



WAR. WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? ENCOURAGING VIDEOGAME DEVELOPERS TO CREATE EVER MORE REALISTIC WAR SIMS FOR ONE THING. AND THEN USING THESE TO TRAIN THE NAVIES OF THE WORLD FOR FUTURE CONFLICT.

Words by | **Simon Kirrane and Glen Weston**

■ The *Dr Who* yard sale proved a boon for the cash-strapped armed forces. Exterminate.



The dot high above the horizon becomes a line, the line develops wings, and as the plane draws above the HMS Gloucester with a banshee wail, it slows to a physics-defying crawl, before twisting and roaring away from the 21-ship flotilla that sailed from Plymouth harbour that morning. What's happening? Well it's Thursday, which means it's war off the south coast of England. Week in, week out, all the NATO ships in the area, and a smattering of aircraft, join in a bloodless battle to the death, designed to keep our naval defences on their toes.

So what is *Arcade* doing here?

Well, war has always been conducted at the cutting edge of technology, and today that includes videogame technology. Indeed, when television news broadcasts show laser-guided missiles taking out specific targets in a particular campaign, the military are often criticised for turning war into a game.

The military could respond, of course, by saying that it's all a bit different when you can't save your position to disk and then reload if your opponent starts winning. However, sitting in the comfort of your living room, you can, and so you can be sure that even before the peace treaties are signed, there'll be a game



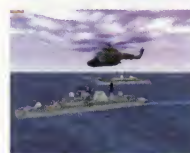
■ Doesn't look quite so cool ploughing the slate seas off the south coast, does it?

developer racing to finish a pixel-perfect terrain map, rocket launcher or virtual chemical warfare suit that will enable you to recreate the latest conflict in as much detail as possible.

As it has become possible to incorporate more and more detail into videogames, and as the AI that backs them up has become more powerful, so they have become useful to the military for training and recruitment purposes. Flight, tank and submarine sims can give a close-to-realistic portrayal of modern warfare and the split-second decisions that need to be taken. On the naval front, *Jane's Fleet*

Command from EA looks set to join SSI's *Harpoon* series in being used both professionally by navies worldwide as well as modern-day Admiral Nelson wannabes. Both games offer scenarios that put you in charge of frigates, submarines, cruisers and aircraft carriers and enable you to recreate a number of recent conflicts around the globe. Both also have powerful mission editors that enable you to pit the world's major naval fleets against each other in circumstances and areas of your choosing.

The games developer can, of course, run into problems with this



■ "We are sailing. We are sailing..."

type of highly detailed sim. On the one hand, a hardcore of fans will quickly damn a game that features a weapons system that can take out an enemy unit 2,000 metres away when in reality it can only do so at 1,900 metres. On the other, it's a maxim that for participants of real-life warfare the experience is 99% boredom and 1% terror which does not a good game make, however realistic the programming may be.

It becomes a fine art, then, to provide a war sim that is realistic enough to be utilised by the officers on board one of Her Majesty's ships for



■ (Above) Now then, where did we put those pointy hats?
■ (Left) Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Navy Nun...



■ "Yes, Captain Jackson is a little pernickety..."



■ How many miles has she done again?

training purposes, while at the same time giving you the playability you need for an exciting videogame.

Out on the open seas, training turned out to be surprisingly similar to its virtual counterpart. In the operations room of the HMS Gloucester, a cramped, blacked out place where lots of machines go "ping", warfare seemed a world away.

A couple of dozen radar screens tracked every move of the manoeuvre with missiles, torpedoes and the like represented on-screen as opposed to death-dealing reality. As planes circled and swept by the ships, they appeared on-screen as small white maggots and crew members furiously figured out how to foil the ship-bound onslaught.

Occasionally, the decision was made to fire tinfoil – or "chaff" – bombs into the wind in order to scramble the path of the virtual projectiles, and then deploy offensive counter measures

Outside, fishermen trawled, oblivious to the intensive action...



■ "We're still sailing. We're still sailing..."

such as the awesome Sea Dart missiles which take out incoming bombs. At one stage, all the operators' screens flashed up orange, accompanied by a cry of "whoa" from across the room as the ship's radar was jammed. Outside, fishermen trawled, oblivious to the intensive action that was happening all around them.

However, there was one substantial difference between the videogame and real-life scenarios, which was that all this was taking place aboard the Gloucester, which is a battle-ready Type 42 destroyer. At one point, a Lynx helicopter was dispatched on a recce and the ship entered a mini sea trial,

shooting off at a speed that turned its wake from an infrequent spittle to a rage of white horses higher than the stern. A full right rudder turn at this speed pushed the ship into a 30-degree list, the *Arcade* camera bags lurched and presentation PCs tumbled off tables. Not your everyday games playing experience then.

However, of all the events of the Thursday War, the most palpable sensation was one of tension, followed by release and then vigilance. These are the sort of emotions games such as *Fleet Command* need to be able to deliver. Naturally a videogame will never truly recreate the feeling of being at war – and who in all honesty would want it to? – but recreating the thrill of evading an attack or dispatching an enemy to an early grave is essential for the success of a war sim.

By tea-time the Thursday War was over and *Arcade* headed below decks

Top 10 military sims *That games that, for better or worse, put your finger on the button.*



Total Air War

■ Developer: **DID**
■ Publisher: **Ocean** ■ Price: **£25**
■ Born out of the hugely successful *F22* series, this flight sim scores by offering ten dynamic campaigns that make you feel like a real war is going on while you fly your missions. Lack of cheat modes mean that this isn't a title for beginners, though.



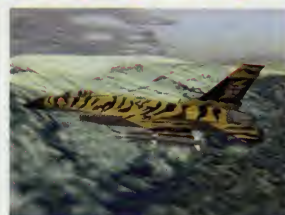
Longbow 2

■ Developer: **Janes Combat Simulations**
■ Publisher: **EA** ■ Price: **£20**
■ You get three campaigns to play in this, the most detailed helicopter sim available. Superb graphics mean that after you've crashed in flames, you can watch the rest of your flight buddies take on the mission with greater success.



M1 Tank Platoon 2

■ Developer: **Microprose**
■ Publisher: **Microprose**
■ Price: **£15**
■ After reading the 280-page manual, drive around in the world's most powerful tank and shoot up enemy units in Europe, Africa, Iraq and Asia. Although manning the guns is fun, you'll need to master the tactical map to achieve success.



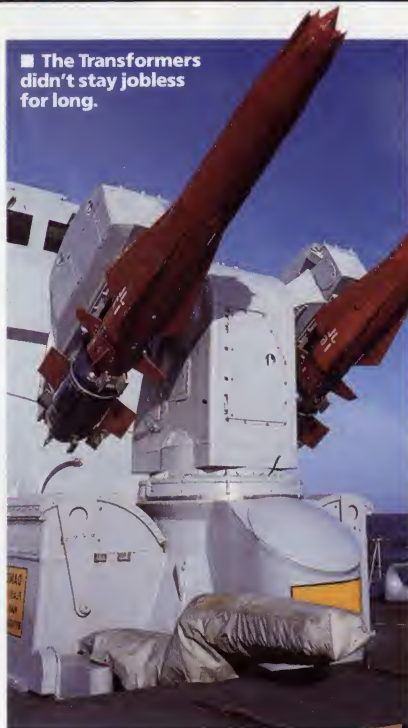
Falcon 4

■ Developer: **Microprose**
■ Publisher: **Microprose**
■ Price: **£35**
■ So detailed you'll imagine that after a few sessions you could really fly a modern jet fighter. Then you'll remember how often you've crashed into tiny pieces and realise you never will. Very realistic and therefore very hard to master.



MiG Alley

■ Developer: **Rowan Software**
■ Publisher: **Empire Interactive**
■ Price: **£40**
■ Set during the Korean War in the early '50s, this beautifully drawn sim covers the crossover from propeller to jet power. The resulting high-speed dogfights are unique to this period and make for five action-packed campaigns. Great stuff.



■ The Transformers didn't stay jobless for long.

to take a look at the last eight hours worth of action, replayed to the crew on *Fleet Command*, courtesy of the game's Mission Editor. This is the element of the game that appeals most to the Navy, as it offers the opportunity to clearly demonstrate where a mission or tactic was successful, or otherwise. The facility also means that alternative courses of action can be run through without having to get a fleet of 21 ships up to full speed and going through particularly complex manoeuvres.

Debriefing over, it was time to retire to the Wardroom for steak, chips and a beer. The officers wore outlandish cummerbunds and the crew started to ease off again, safe from the threat of death from above. Tomorrow night they would be back on board and the piss up was going to be "massive". Next Thursday though, it would be war as usual.



At the heart of the operation

Inside the control room of a Royal Navy stealth frigate...

■ Communication is the key to a successful campaign and a ship's control room is the very heart of communication. Housing the radar, sonar, missile and torpedo controls among others, all the action taking place outside the ship is orchestrated from this vital area. Constantly

scanning the skies above the ship, the surface of the sea, and the waters below for potential hostile threats, this room is at the very centre of operations. From here the captain can follow the action, exchange information with the rest of the friendly air and sea traffic and plan out strategies for both attack and defence.



688(1) Hunter Killer

■ Developer: **Janes Combat Simulations**

■ Publisher: **EA** ■ Price: **£20**

■ Very detailed sub sim with a wide range of missions that include rescuing downed airmen and landing friendly troops. Just as well because actually making contact and nearly managing to sink an enemy vessel can take more than an hour real-time.



European Air War

■ Developer: **Microprose**

■ Publisher: **Microprose**

■ Price: **£20**

■ Re-fight the Battle of Britain or take part in various missions over France and Germany in the later years of WW2. On hand are realistically performing aircraft of all descriptions that you can choose to fly as an RAF, Luftwaffe or USAF pilot.



Wargasm

■ Developer: **DID**

■ Publisher: **DID** ■ Price: **£20**

■ Plan your strategy and then jump into tanks, helicopters and even infantry troopers' boots when the shooting starts. Too arcadey for some purists, but this fast-paced game is fun to play, which helps.

Flying Corps

■ Developer: **Rowan Software**

■ Publisher: **Empire Interactive**

■ Price: **£15**

■ Six authentically drawn WW1 aircraft, along with plenty of missions to fly at a speed that enables you to carefully plan how to bring down your next victim. Excellent customisation options offer novices a chance to become the Red Baron reincarnate.

Silent Hunter

■ Developer: **Aeon Electronic Entertainment**

■ Publisher: **SSI** ■ Price: **£10**

■ Despite this game showing its age a bit, it's still a much-loved submarine sim that's about to be updated by SH2. The action is centred on the Pacific theatre during WW2, and the wide variety of missions and difficulty levels should keep you interested.



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CONFESSIONS

OF A TOMB RAIDER FANATIC

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON DODD

Words by | Rich Pelley

Arcade tracks down the biggest Tomb Raider fan in Britain, and pops round to see what the fuss is about.

Terry Nibblett is a market analyst from Plymouth. He is 28 years old, single, and likes "drinking, curry, and breasts". He is an avid supporter of Manchester United, but has never actually seen them play. The last album he bought was *Wonder Number 8* by The Honeyz. His favourite TV programmes are *EastEnders*, *They Think It's All Over* and *Bits*. He is 5'10", and has size nine feet. He last got off with a

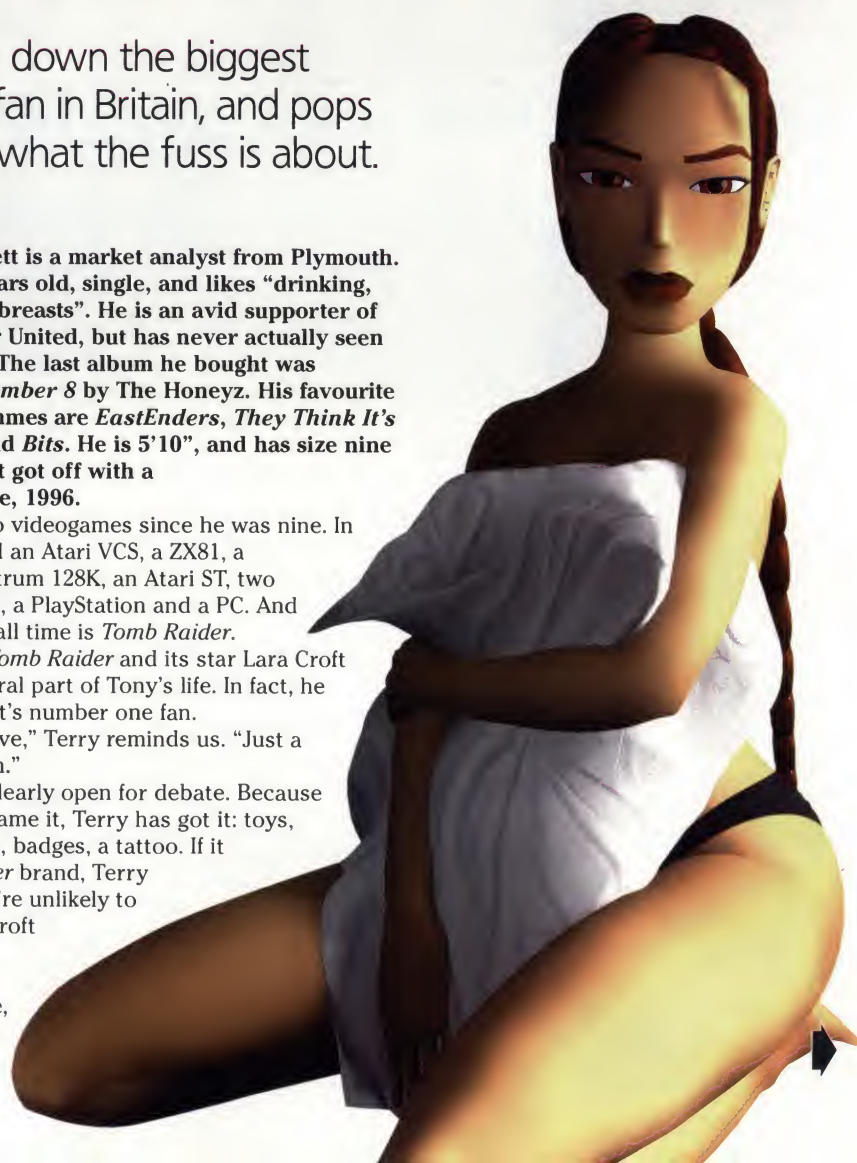
girl on New Year's Eve, 1996.

Terry has been into videogames since he was nine. In his time he has owned an Atari VCS, a ZX81, a Spectrum 48K, a Spectrum 128K, an Atari ST, two Amigas, a NES, a SNES, a PlayStation and a PC. And his favourite game of all time is *Tomb Raider*.

Since it's release, *Tomb Raider* and its star Lara Croft have become an integral part of Tony's life. In fact, he claims to be Lara Croft's number one fan.

"I'm not an obsessive," Terry reminds us. "Just a common or garden fan."

But this, Terry, is clearly open for debate. Because Lara Croft-wise, you name it, Terry has got it: toys, jackets, posters, mugs, badges, a tattoo. If it sports the *Tomb Raider* brand, Terry probably owns it. You're unlikely to meet more of a Lara Croft fanatic. Which is why *Arcade* tracked him down in the first place, and went round to his house to talk shop.

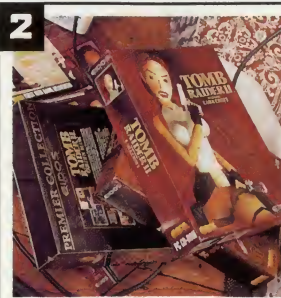


■ "I'm not an obsessive, just a common or garden fan."



1 Suitcase

"I've never had much of an inclination to travel before. I've never had the time. Actually, that's a lie. I've had plenty of time, just no friends to go with. But Lara Croft has given me a passion to travel. After all, she's a girl who's managed to get around a bit, be it the catacombs of the original *Tomb Raider*, or the around-the-world trip of *Tomb Raider 3*. It's my plan to visit each place Lara has visited. I'm currently saving up enough money to visit Egypt, the setting of the new *Tomb Raider* game. Er, which of the locations Lara has visited have I managed to go to? Well, I went to London once. I didn't like it very much."



2 Games

"*Tomb Raider* came out about the same time as I bought my PlayStation, and it was the first game I bought. It took me three weeks to finish it. I finished *Tomb Raider 2* in just under a week, and the third in three days. OK, so I didn't manage to do much else for that three days. Personally, I prefer to play games from the comfort of my bed. Saves all that hassle of getting up, for example. Plus, it provides easy access for ample celebration whenever I manage to get past any particularly tricky bit, if you know what I mean."



3 The Models

"Ah, they're lovely, aren't they? Lara Weller's my favourite. Nell's a bit rough, if you ask me. At least, she was when she had her head shaved. And Rhona Mitra was plain annoying. But Lara Weller... wouldn't mind a bit of that on toast, if you know what I mean. I can't wait until the *Tomb Raider* film comes out. Do you know who's going to play Lara? I read that it was going to be Catherine Zeta Jones. She's lovely too. Got hitched to that Michael Douglas character, hasn't she? What's she thinking? He's old enough to be her dad."



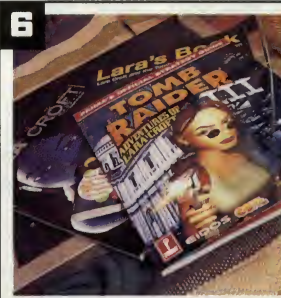
4 Pants

"Ahem. Sorry about those. It's a man's prerogative to hang his pants up on the floor, though, isn't it? Got these from Marks & Spencers. It's probably the closest my genitals are ever going to get to Lara Croft. They're good, they are, M&S. You can take anything back you don't want, even if you've worn it. You're not supposed to, of course, but as long as the lady behind the returns desk doesn't sniff them too carefully you're usually all right."



5 Outfits

"I don't normally dress up like this, you know. Well, sometimes I do, but what a man does in the privacy of his own home and all that. These costumes aren't official, you know. I created them myself for various fancy dress parties I've been invited to over the years. Maybe it's inevitable that I'm going to turn up as Lara Croft to any fancy dress party I go to. Some people. You try to be a bit creative at a Vicar and Tarts party and all you get is stick."



6 Books

"It's amazing how much stuff there is to know about Lara Croft. There are entire books dedicated to her, you know. Did you know that her favourite food is beans on toast? That's mine too! Apart from Coco Pops, of course. I couldn't believe it when they changed the name of Coco Pops to Choco Krispies. And what about Heinz, eh? They're going to abolish Salad Cream now. Anyway, look at this! It's a magazine about Lara Croft. Shall I read some out? Dennoch: Lara Croft feiert Erfolge, von denen reale Stars und Sternchen nur träumen können. Sie ist beispielsweise die erste. It's in German. I haven't got a clue what it means."



7 Comics

"I don't think much of these Lara Croft comics, to tell the truth. I quite like Watchman, and Batman The Dark Knight, but most comics go a bit above my head. Maybe I'm missing the point with these Witchblade ones, but look! She doesn't even look like Lara Croft. Well, not much. She takes most of her clothes off inside, though, so that's good."



8 PC

"Ah, the Internet. The old information superhighway, eh? The greatest invention of the '90s? Apart from Pop Tarts, I'd say. There's tons of stuff on the Internet about Lara. You know that there are 19,749 Web pages if you type "Lara Croft" into Yahoo? Give it a try."



9 Friends

"I know what you're thinking. 'Terry, you're thinking, 'Come on, get a grip. Is this really typical behaviour of a grown man?'. But I'm not alone, you know. There are plenty of people who are into Lara as much as me. I've managed to get in contact with quite a few of them over the Internet, actually. And just like me they like dressing up as their heroine, although if you ask me I'm one of the more convincing Laras. What's that? All right, so most of them are under ten, but what's age got to do with it? Do I what? Of course not. There are laws against that sort of thing, you know. I'm not completely stupid."



10 Figures

"What do you mean, toys are for kids? They're collectors' items. That's why I haven't taken them out of the packet."



11 Merchandise

"Core actually produces a range of official Lara-branded clothes too. And while I'm not a big stickler for fashion, I just had to buy all this stuff. This jacket is quite nice, and especially warm. Useful for those late-night snack visits to the 24-hour garage. I've got a fleece, too, and lots of T-Shirts. My Mum says she'll turn into Lara Croft if she has to iron another Lara T-Shirt, but I can only see that as an added bonus."



12 PlayStation

"Ah, my old pal, Percy PlayStation. Do you know when *Tomb Raider 5* is coming out? If Core's past record is anything to go by, it'll probably be at the end of next year. I'm just wondering about PlayStation2. When's that coming out? Next year in Japan, isn't it? But the Japanese don't really like *Tomb Raider*, do they? The Americans love it though, as do us Brits. I reckon *Tomb Raider 5* will come out on the PlayStation, and then they'll do a brand new one called *Super Tomb Raider* or something on PlayStation2."

Vital statistics

They're about the same height, share a love of baked beans and have the same coloured eyes. Could it be that, as per Terry's fevered imaginings, the adventurous archaeologist and the market analyst are made for each other?

Name: **Lara Croft**



■ **Date of birth:** 14 February 1967
 ■ **Eyes:** Brown
 ■ **Height:** 5ft 9ins
 ■ **Weight:** 9st 4lbs
 ■ **Measurements:** 34D/24/35
 ■ **Occupation:** Archaeologist
 ■ **Hair:** Brown
 ■ **Blood type:** AB negative
 ■ **Birthplace:** Wimbledon, London
 ■ **Parents:** The daughter of Lord Henshingly Croft

■ **Education:** Gordonstoun boarding school
 ■ **Marital status:** Single
 ■ **Previous boyfriends:** The Earl of Farringdon
 ■ **Favourite film:** Deliverance
 ■ **Favourite bands:** U2, Nine Inch Nails
 ■ **Favourite food:** Beans on toast
 ■ **Favourite vehicle:** Norton bike
 ■ **Favourite cities:** Atlantis, London
 ■ **Hobbies:** Climbing, Skiing, Shooting

Name: **Terry Nibblett**



■ **Date of birth:** 2 October 1971
 ■ **Eyes:** Brown
 ■ **Height:** 5ft 10in
 ■ **Weight:** 13st 2lbs
 ■ **Measurements:** 40B/38/40
 ■ **Occupation:** Market analyst
 ■ **Hair:** Brown
 ■ **Blood type:** Doesn't know
 ■ **Birthplace:** Plymouth
 ■ **Parents:** Mum and Dad
 ■ **Education:** O Levels

■ **Marital status:** Single
 ■ **Previous girlfriends:** N/A
 ■ **Favourite film:** Star Wars
 ■ **Favourite bands:** Britney Spears, The Honeyz
 ■ **Favourite food:** Beans on toast, Coco Pops, Pop Tarts
 ■ **Favourite vehicle:** The bus
 ■ **Favourite cities:** Plymouth
 ■ **Hobbies:** Videogames

Gimme, gimme, gimme

You've seen the joy that is Terry's life, now get down the shops and live it for yourself. Tell them Arcade sent you.

1 Suitcase

■ Model's own

2 Games

■ **Tomb Raider 1, 2, 3 and The Last Revelation**, available for PlayStation and PC from Eidos.
 ■ **Tomb Raider and Tomb Raider 2** are now available on Platinum for the PlayStation.
 ■ **Tomb Raider: Unfinished Business** and **Tomb Raider 2:**

The Golden Mask, both featuring extra levels, are available on budget for the PC. There are free PC downloads on Core's Web site at <http://www.core-design.com>

3 The Models

■ **Nell McAndrew** in her pants with no hair from **Arcade 2**; **Lara Weller** in the full kit from **Arcade 8**

4 Pants

■ Boxer shorts available from Marks & Spencers

5 Outfits

■ Model's own

6 Books

■ **Lara's Book: Lara Croft and the Tomb Raider Phenomenon** by Douglas Coupland, Prima Press RRP £15.99.

Tomb Raider 3 Official Strategy Guide, Prima Press RRP £9.99.
 ■ **Lara Croft Magazin**, Germany, RRP DM 9,80

7 Comics

■ Published by Top Cow productions

8 PC

■ **Core Design:** <http://www.core-design.com>

Official Tomb Raider site: <http://www.tombraider.com>.
 The Croft Times: <http://www.croft-times.net/>

9 Friends

■ Model's own

10 Figures

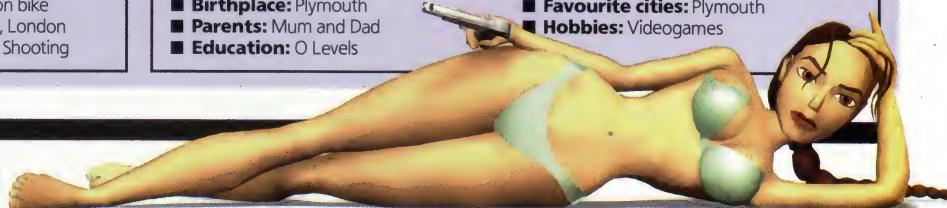
■ Available from American company Playmates

11 Merchandise

■ Available online from <http://www.core-design.com>

12 PlayStation

■ Available from all high street shops



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The Innovator.

The Elevator.

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December 1999



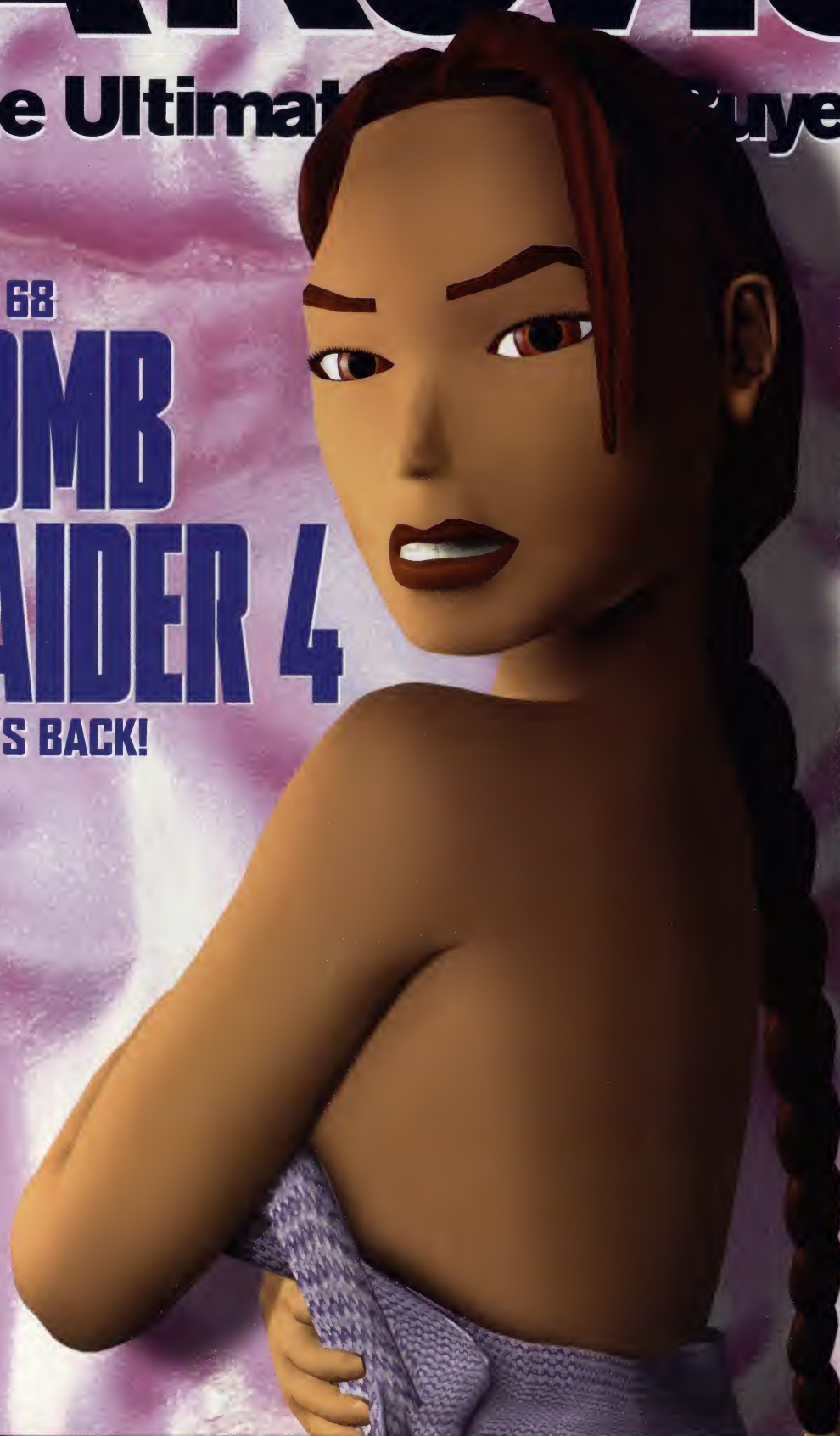
A Review

The Ultimate Buyer's Guide

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TOMB RAIDER 4

LARA'S BACK!



INSIDE...

Quake II
Jet Force Gemini
GTA2
Ready 2 Rumble
Final Fantasy VIII
Dino Crisis
Mario Golf
System Shock 2
House of the Dead
Pokémon
Metal Gear Solid:
Special Missions
Rayman 2
Metal Slug

59
GAMES
REVIEWED!

PLUS! VIDEOS/BOOKS/MUSIC/COMICS/INTERNET/TOYS/GAMES
ACCESSORIES/CD-ROMS/FILMS/DVD/GADGETS

Star ratings

★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really must play.
★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
★★★ Good stuff. Not a world-beater, but fine within its genre.
★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
★ Awful. Avoid at all costs.

Arcade
PlayStation
Game of
the Month

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVEL

THE ARISTOCRATIC ADVENTURESS SEEKS ENLIGHTENMENT IN EGYPT.



ATION



Game info

- Publisher: **Eidos**
- Developer: **Core**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **27 November**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**



Well, wouldn't you know it... Lara's back. And despite fears that *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* would prove little more than a Christmas cash cow, the latest adventure of the most celebrated English explorer since Scott is a cracker. It has the atmosphere and direction of Lara's first adventure, features little of the mindless, banal blasting that made the second episode so underwhelming in places and, finally, it discards with the endless wandering that typified *Tomb Raider 3*, a game that even Core admits was little more than an exercise in preaching to the converted.

There was a very real danger after *Tomb Raider 3* that the series was poised to stumble into a spiked pit of its own creation. Bigger and more don't necessarily add up to better – and yet Core, reluctant to tamper too much with a successful formula, was apparently unable (or unwilling) to grasp that fact. Fans liked (and loved) the second and third *Tomb Raiders*, just as haters of all things Croft dismissed both as level add-ons dressed as full-price releases. There was also the problem that both sequels were a mite too difficult for casual gamers. At times, they more resembled tests of endurance rather than the full-on entertainment you'd expect from a £40 investment. And what of the competition? Could Core afford to ignore the likes of *Silent Hill*, *Metal Gear Solid* and *Zelda*?

The Last Revelation is every bit the definitive *Tomb Raider* game. From the minute you start playing – guiding a youthful, pigtailed Lara through a Cambodian ruin – there are basic gameplay attributes you know to expect. Lara runs, leaps and dives as she always has and, while you're pondering the paradox of how she can use her dash move before its *Tomb Raider 3* debut – think about it – you begin to notice other things, too. Like Werner Von Croy.

The story behind Lara's flashback-style outing is simple. For a modest donation from the bulging Croft family coffers, a 16-year-old Lara gains a place on an expedition led by Austrian adventurer Werner Von Croy. The senior Crofts believe it will be of educational benefit to their daughter. They may even be a career in it...

As you make your first steps through the impressive Cambodian locale, Werner relates the finer aspects of negotiating lost ruins to a rapt Lara. And, amazingly, he performs every action himself. Von Croy is just as athletic and capable as Lara, being a top dog *Tomb Raider* of that time. If young Croft lags behind, he'll beckon her forward for further instruction. Later, as they enter the heart of a long-deserted

■ **Celebrity skinned:** Lara is now a smooth, textured lass – a far cry from her porky polygon past.





■ There are two ways to destroy this skeleton. Tricky.

temple, he challenges her to a race in order to test her mettle in a trap-laden maze. While you pursue Von Croy, marvelling at the vastly-improved AI code that guides him, *The Last Revelation* sneakily introduces an integral plot twist... which will remain under wraps here.

Once Lara's escapade in Cambodia reaches its conclusion, the scene switches to present-day Egypt. With you having been adequately prepared by that first training session, disguised as a mini-adventure, *The Last Revelation* bombards you with new experiences and features. Some are purely aesthetic, such as environment mapping, light sourcing and lavishly-textured rooms. The game looks great, and is packed with



■ (Above) More dizzying heights and architecture for Croft to visit.

THE LATEST ADVENTURE OF THE MOST CELEBRATED EXPLORER SINCE SCOTT IS A CRACKER.

inconsequential details that amount to more than the sum of their many parts. Beneath this desirable facade, however, lies a degree of cunning that the *Tomb Raider* games have lacked for far too long.

Like a friend who talks in *The Fast Show* catchphrases, *Tomb Raider*'s old "find key, use switch" puzzles were getting a bit tiresome and relied too heavily on wandering from one map extreme to the other in order to present a challenge. While that may be a fairly accurate reiteration of common real-life brain teasers – like trying to find your coat, car keys and wallet before going to work – it's a bit of an unspectacular brief for a videogame. Previous *Tomb Raiders*, especially the first, disguised the elementary nature of the puzzles by separating and complementing them with awe-inspiring vistas and set-pieces. But even dizzying heights and t-rex attacks can lose excitement value when used too often.

The Last Revelation does not do away with switches, keys and movable blocks. Instead, it refines all three elements and presents them as side dishes to a main meal of individually-programmed puzzles. There's one section where Lara's way forward is blocked. There's no apparent switch. You explore every inch of the rooms you can reach. Just as you're about to call it a night and slip off to bed, you notice scrape marks on tiles leading from a large pot to an otherwise unremarkable piece of floor space. You drag it over (noting, as you do so, that Lara now pushes and pulls in one fluid, constant animation sequence), and that particular tiny conundrum is solved. This is, by the standards of the rest of the puzzles, an insignificant enigma – but it's markedly more subtle than, for instance, identifying a wall block of a different colour and pushing it.

Sometimes the puzzles can prove easy fodder for experienced gamers but, nonetheless, prove a more evocative, imaginative alternative to a switch. There's one



■ Swinging on ropes, racing in a oddly nippy Land Rover...



↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Wonderbar

- Souped-up puzzles
- Improved opposition AI
- A real sequel

Wonderbra

- Same old dodgy combat system
- Wait a mo... she ain't naked

■ If Lara were to be attacked by Fire Wraiths, this hatch would be a real life-saver...



room furnished with snake statues. Each snake has a lever set into it. By moving each one, certain snake heads belch forth flames, while the volatile emissions of others are quenched. Working out the correct sequence isn't overly difficult. Core, however, is highly aware that not every PlayStation owner has the patience or the gaming savvy to tackle this kind of dilemma. For this reason – and also, in part, to allow far more complex puzzles later on – Lara now comes equipped with a diary. From inscriptions to clues, every piece of relevant information discovered is jotted down for future reference.

The various in-game events of *The Last Revelation* are complemented by around 40 minutes of cut scenes. Using both the in-game engine and the more lavishly-rendered excesses of FMV, these spin a beguiling tale. Some may sneer at this snippet of information, asserting that videogames are supposed to be active entertainment rather than animation spooled for passive consumption, but the presence of these asides adds drama to proceedings. There were times in the last two installations of *Tomb Raider* when it was hard to shake the feeling that there was no reason for Lara being where she was, or indeed why her location existed at all.

The smooth transitions from link to action in *The Last Revelation* don't just explain the nuances of plot twists and developments. They also help blur the boundaries between the two areas of the game. And another thing: the game doesn't purely rely on pre-rendered sequences to provide narrative highlights. There are many in-game moments that

are just as immersive and equally startling as the purpose-built FMV cut scenes.

The way Lara fights is better than the other *Tomb Raider* games, too. The artificial intelligence code that makes Werner Von Croy such an active coach during the first two levels manifests itself in Lara's many foes. Some of the opponents you come across are there for nuisance value alone, but many must be defeated in a certain way. They take cover behind scenery to avoid Lara's shots, grab ammunition, leap chasms and generally represent able opposition. Sometimes there's nothing you can do but run away – and that can be just as exhilarating. However, the combat is guilty of the clumsy flaws of past Croft escapades. That said, you can't help but admire how the fighting action has been redesigned for this latest offering. And it's an improvement that has been too long in coming.

You have, no doubt, already spotted the five, red stars that conclude this review. You've also sussed that the overall tone of the text preceding them is almost entirely complimentary. And with good reason. *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, while remaining true to the spirit of its forebears, is the nearest to a sequel *Tomb Raider* has ever had. Numbers two and three still look good, but this is challenging while remaining accessible; clever without being incomprehensible. That's why it deserves your pre-Christmas dollar. ★★★★★

Cam Anderson

Or you could try...

Tomb Raider
Eidos ★★★★★
The game that started it all, sporting excellent level design and atmosphere.

Tenchu: Stealth Assassin
Activision ★★★★★
Kung Fu action and a man with a grappling hook. And sketchy graphics.



■ Lara's other vehicle is an antiquated motorbike and sidecar.



■ Little details like this make *TR4* a remarkable game to explore.

■ And then the hall resounded with a spooky cry of "Pyramid bags... it's the taste."

PC

PC Lara, reporting for duty

■ While the PlayStation version of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* is representative of coding at its finest on Sony's machine, it's a mite less impressive as a PC title. It is, naturally, a more beautiful game to behold. The PC version boasts a frame rate far in excess of its PlayStation peer; furthermore, it will run happily at 1024x768 on a reasonably specced machine. It does not, to be frank, even begin to push the boundaries of your average home computer. But how many games have rivalled the original *Tomb Raider* in terms of vision and depth? Can you name a single PC-based thirdperson platform game that can hold a candle to Core's original 1996 masterpiece? Exactly. *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* may not tax your Voodoo 3500 or TNT2 32Mb, but it offers an innovation that no amount of revolutionary coding or hardware can guarantee: gameplay. And that's why you should buy it. But make sure you have a decent joystick to play it with...



■ He's prepared: Lord Baden-Powell would be proud.



Game info

■ Publisher: **Activision**
■ Developer: **Hammerhead/id**
■ Price: **£40**
■ Release date: **on sale now**
■ Players: **1-4**
■ Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible, mouse, multi tap**

QUAKE II

COULD THIS BE THE FINEST PLAYSTATION TITLE EVER?

This shouldn't have been possible. A conversion of ID's superlative first-person blaster for Sony's clunky five-year-old grey box. But it's happened, and we all should be thankful that it has. *Quake II* is violently magnificent – one of the best games ever made for the PlayStation.

Quake II for the PC has a fanatical following with hundreds of Internet sites dedicated to multi-player deathmatches. Developer Hammerhead has obviously worked very closely with id to make sure the title remained faithful to the feel of the original, with all the monsters, weapons and levels recreated in detail. There are even a few

new nasty surprises lurking about to keep even the most hardened Quakeophile happy.

The game opens with a moody sci-fi FMV sequence that sets the scene for your character's gung-ho attack against the Strogg home planet. One of the first things that hits you when you begin the game is the superb quality of the graphics. Coloured lighting effects illuminate every level and the many species of Strogg – most of which are disgusting hybrids of bloody flesh and scorched metal – have been made suitably disgusting.

The larger enemies that you come up against further into the game are genuinely frightening – their ferocious

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Quake II
■ Unbelievable graphics
■ Great level design
■ Four-player frugging

Jaws II
■ Loading is an inconvenience
■ Music is rockin' awful
■ Pad control takes some getting used to



■ (Above) Just another day at the mall.
■ (Left) "You're going home in a Strogg ambulance."

THE ONE-PLAYER GAME IS IMMERSING AND SCARY... THE MULTI-PLAYER IS UNSURPASSED.

bulks lumbering inevitably towards you, intent on inflicting permanent damage at every turn.

Using the PlayStation pad to play the game takes some getting used to as looking up and down with the shoulder buttons is difficult and usually results in you getting shot. An analogue pad makes it easier as you can configure the buttons and you get the added bonus of Dual Shock vibrations. But the best way of playing the game is to use a PlayStation mouse to look around, fire and jump, and clutch your trusty pad in the other hand for movement and changing weapons. This works a treat and enables you to sneer at your nerdy PC mates for spending more than a grand to play games as good as this.

Level design in *Quake II* is almost an artform. Every nightmare-inducing mission is challenging, without being so difficult that you'll get frustrated and frag off. Some of the areas you encounter are horrible, with the terrified voices of battle-scarred Earth soldiers echoing out of blood-stained torture chambers. There are hidden rooms and bonus weapons scattered throughout the game, so exploration is essential for gathering the health, armour and ammunition you'll need for survival in later levels.

Weaponry is plentiful, varied and lethal. They range from a lowly blaster – which is about as useful as a pop gun, through to a very handy chaingun, long-range rocket launcher and infamous BFG 9000. The "B" is for big, the "G" is for gun – it doesn't require much thought to work out what the "F" is for. All the hardware has a serious kick, and dishing out violent justice Earth-style is an immensely satisfying experience.

One main area where PlayStation games differ from PC titles is in the saving of games. *Quake II* is made easier on the PC by the fact you can save the game anywhere with a quick press of a function key. On the PlayStation you have to fight your way through several stages before you get offered the chance to save your progress to memory card. This might be seen as a disadvantage, but it really increases the excitement and adrenaline when you're reaching the end of a level and you're almost dead with limited firepower. To give rookies a chance, the game also gives you the option to start three levels of your choice with full

health and ammunition – the temptation being to use these early instead of saving them for the harder levels.

The single-player game is great, but the most surprising and breathtaking element of *Quake II* is the multi-player deathmatch. This is an every man for himself killing spree that can involve up to four people using a multi tap, with no noticeable slowdown. It's fantastic fun and results in much shouting, swearing and gnashing of teeth from all participants. With 20 different maps to choose from and other options including team-play, there's plenty to keep you and your mates entertained for many months.

There are a couple of minor criticisms. The game loads levels just as you're about to go through a door, which can result in awkward movement into different areas. The other problem is an awful rock soundtrack.

That aside, *Quake II* is a chillingly beautiful ballet of ultra-violence. As you make your way through the game with no frame-rate loss, fogging or glitches, you keep asking yourself how the programmers did it. The one-player game is immersing and scary while the multi-player options are unsurpassed. The package as a whole is nigh-on perfect: gaming heaven, in hell. ★★★★★

Jamie Sefton

Or you could try...

Doom
GT Interactive ★★★★★
id's first violent outing on the PlayStation and still a blast.

Duke Nukem 3D
GT Interactive ★★★★★
Duke's an OAP now, but can still kick mutant butt.



■ There's nothing more satisfying than blasting away at your mates, reducing them to a grisly mess.



■ A big gun will soon wipe the smile off the Strogg's face.



■ England rugby team's new prop forward.

Game info

- Publisher: Sony
- Developer: Square
- Price: £35
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1
- Other systems: PC

FINAL FANTASY VIII

BID FOND FAREWELL TO YOUR FREE TIME.



■ Less of a game, more of an opera. Maybe.



■ Squall is the loner hero of this Fantasy title.

Rather like Richard Attenborough-as-Santa vehicle *Miracle on 34th Street*, the *Final Fantasy* series has always been a magical alliance between the old and new. And number eight is no exception. Examine the back of the box and you'll behold a vision of cutting-edge graphical loveliness – screenshots of the most fantastic battles and action sequences ever committed to plastic. You're promised amazing monster attacks, colossal explosions and computer-generated cut scenes that'll make *Toy Story* look like *South Park*.

But sit down and play it and you'll find much of your time is spent squinting at '70s-style screens of acronyms and numbers that wouldn't look out of place in an air traffic control centre. These form *Final Fantasy*'s increasingly complicated magic system, and a complete understanding is vital if you're to reach the end of the fourth CD intact.

Back to the pretty stuff, though, and *FFVIII* truly is a chin-bruiser. At its most basic level it features 3D polygonal characters wandering around against static, pre-rendered backgrounds. The characters are brilliantly detailed – they've

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Fantasy Fulfilled	Final Straw
■ Blistering graphics	■ Clunky stat stuff
■ Gripping story	■ Repetitive fights
■ Intricate combat	■ Horrid character

come miles since the chunky inhabitants of *FFVII* – and stay that way even when they're zoomed in so far their noses are pressed against the screen.

Then, when you get attacked, the game goes into battle mode. The camera swings around wildly, frantically zooming in and out as your enemies materialise. Everyone strikes a pose, and then there's a fierce battle worthy of any anime video, with all manner of elaborate special moves.

But the real fun starts when you summon one of your demon spirit Guardian Friends (GFs). Ifrit, for example, leaps into shot with a mighty roar, flies thousands of feet into the air, conjures up a huge fireball and then hurls it down upon your foe in a dazzling 30-second sequence (which gets a bit tedious when you're watching it for the 4,012th time). And then finally, every so often, just when you think the graphics can't get any better, along comes one of the story-telling cut scenes. These are utterly astounding, beautifully



■ (Above) Rent cars to get you from A to B quicker.
 ■ (Left) Once you qualify as a member of SeeD you earn a daily wage.
 ■ (Below) Incredible CGI cut scenes dominate the game, hence the four CD sprawl.



SQUALL IS AN ILL-MANNERED OIK... BUT THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF THE STORY WILL KEEP YOU HOOKED.

choreographed and shot, and it's a real shame you can only watch each one once. Unless you play through again...

But none of this really matters because, of course, the real meat of *Final Fantasy VIII* lies with those screens of acronyms and numbers. Here's where you juggle the items and magic you've accumulated along the way, train your GFs, adjust statuses and limit breaks, and sort your cards. There's also a new "junction" system, which enables you to channel magic you've drawn from enemies into the specific abilities of each character. So you could, for example, create one character who's great at beating people up, one who casts a mean thunderstorm spell, and another who's good at curing the battle wounds of the others.

There are pages and pages of the manual devoted to all this, along with copious in-game training. For the *Final Fantasy* newcomer it's bewildering, but once you get the hang of it you'll find you have a huge degree of freedom in the way you tackle the game, turning it into more than just a linear adventure.

The adventure side of the game is also worthy of comment, and presents you with a finely crafted sci-fi story

to play through ("The chequered destinies of two men who repeatedly plunge their mighty souls into battle," as the manual would have it). As with all RPGs you have to endure a fair degree of wandering around having inane conversations with people who say things like "Oh yeah, Fujin's gonna treat, ya know? Want somethin'?" or "S'up, JONATHA?" (The original Japanese would probably be easier to follow at times). And the SeeD warrior you control, Squall, is an ill-mannered oik, so player/character empathy flies straight out of the window. But the twists and turns of the story will keep you hooked; merging reality with dream sequences so you're never quite sure what'll happen next.

Final Fantasy VIII gets five stars then, with the proviso that you need a beard as luxuriant as Dickie's to truly appreciate it.
 ★★★★★ Jonathan Davies



■ Annoying random battles return as do dramatic set pieces.

Or you could try...

Final Fantasy VII
 Square ★★★★★
 Merely a three-disc FF-ort, but half the price. You work it out.

Breath of Fire III
 Virgin ★★★★★
 Going back just years, rather than decades, *Breath* is still a venerable series.



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

■ Publisher: Infogrames
 ■ Developer: X-AMPLE ■ Price: £35
 ■ Release date: on sale now
 ■ Players: 1 ■ Extras: Dual Shock-compatible, memory card

■ Apart from obviously useless titles like *Hugo*, *Rugrats* and the like, never before has a PlayStation game been developed against a background of such sniggering – that of the kind usually reserved for the back of class. Why? Well, its lineage isn't exactly promising: a strangely complicated action movie, a strangely crap Nintendo game and artwork coming straight from the Herman Munster school of design. But you – yes, at the back there – can stop that muffled laughter once and for all. Because *Mission: Impossible* is a pleasingly decent attempt at an action adventure game.

This may have something to do with the developer opting to completely overhaul the bits that came in for the most vilification on N64. But there's nothing wrong with putting a bit of extra effort in, and it pays off. While *Mission: Impossible* isn't going to give *Metal Gear Solid* a stealthy run (tiptoe, then) for its money – the glitchy graphics put pay to that – the number of different tasks you have to undertake make it an enjoyable caper.

Mission: Impossible the game follows the Tom Cruise film to a tee, which means plenty of laser dodging antics, shoot outs at Waterloo station and jumping around on top of Eurostar trains. The game isn't just an action no-brainer though – you're forced to use plenty of puzzle solving skills, talk to people and generally use your head.

True, some of the cut scenes are excruciatingly cheesy and from time to time you feel you're playing a shoddy *Syphon Filter*-clone, but the game boasts the sort of atmospherics that games-of-films haven't managed to generate for ages. However, the most important thing is that *Mission: Impossible* is a heap of fun to play. And, quite frankly, it's about time a big name licence got it together to deliver on that score. Forget the sniggering; while no world beater, *Mission: Impossible*'s a good laugh. ★★★ Ben East

■ Black is the new evil.

■ Pucker up and kiss your ass goodbye. Or something.

Game info

- Publisher: **Virgin**
- Developer: **Capcom**
- Price: **£45**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **Extras: memory card, Dual Shock compatible**

DINO CRISIS

JURASSIC PARK + RESIDENT EVIL = DINO CRISIS. OR DOES IT?

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

- | | |
|---|---|
| T-Rex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tense atmosphere ■ Great graphics – especially the dinosaurs ■ Multiple routes | Keks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clichéd storyline ■ It's too short ■ Not always clear what you should do next |
|---|---|



Dino Crisis should represent a match made in heaven: the tension of *Resident Evil* married with the fascination with dinosaurs that made the *Jurassic Park* films such a success. However, it's not quite as simple as that.

Any discussion of the *Resident Evil* games usually touches on how scary they are. You turn off the lights, close the curtains, boot up the game and scare yourself rigid for a few hours. And so, given that *Dino Crisis* boasts a similar soundtrack, the same cinematic camera angles and – but of course – killer dinosaurs, you should be getting more of the same for your money. However, *Dino Crisis* isn't as scary as it should be. In *Resident Evil* you always feared what was around the next corner. Here it is always a dinosaur, and it turns out they just don't measure up to zombies.

The story is similarly uninspiring, and pretty standard for this kind of game. When communication is lost with a top secret research station a rescue team is sent in to find out what has happened. You are part of that team and your job is to find the maddest scientist of them all and get the hell

out, for which you have a time limit. As the game continues you uncover layer upon layer of deceit and intrigue. Crackpot scientists, illegal experiments, dinosaurs – everything here has been done before, and you can probably already guess what happens in the final scenes. Of course, life isn't as easy as that and there are one or two lizards that are intent on slowing your progress...

As you battle your way through the research station, you're faced with a number of puzzles to solve. These range from simple key finding to pushing blocks around *Tomb Raider*-style, albeit with a little more brainpower required. You also have to crack a number of codes, which come in the form of word puzzles and usually involve you substituting letters for others to find a keycode. In short, the puzzle element of the game plays a far greater role than in *Resident Evil*. Another difference is that there

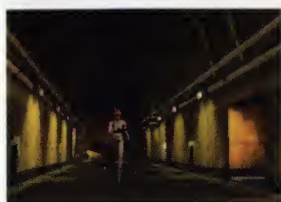
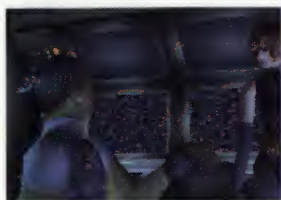
are a number of points in *Dino Crisis* where you must choose which path to take. This doesn't make that much difference to the story, as you end up in the same place anyway, but it means you'll play the game at least a couple of times just to see where the other paths lead.

There is no doubt that *Dino Crisis* is a good game. It feels refined and is solidly built.

There is a good balance between action and puzzles and, at times, the tension generated can become unbearable. But there are problems. One of these is that the game was originally produced for the Japanese market, and



DINO CRISIS IS A GOOD GAME, BUT IT JUST ISN'T AS GOOD AS IT COULD – OR SHOULD – HAVE BEEN.



■ While dinosaurs move faster than any zombie, they just aren't as scary.



as such doesn't last very long. Apparently, Japanese gamers have a taste for games that last no more than ten hours, especially games of this ilk. *Dino Crisis* hits this time limit right on the nail. There are those that will say that this time is about right, and both *Silent Hill* and *Metal Gear Solid* fall neatly into the formula, but, on the other hand, you might want a little more playing for your £40.

Then there is also the idea that videogames should evolve. If you want a game that drastically advances and improves on *Resident Evil*, then you will be sorely disappointed by *Dino Crisis*. True, the environment you move through is no longer stationary, but this is merely an aesthetic advance. While the dinosaurs make for more formidable enemies than zombies, technical restrictions

have meant that they are in far shorter supply. The atmosphere doesn't measure up to *Resident Evil* either – the zombies have it.

However, these can be dismissed to some extent as minor gripes because *Dino Crisis* is a terrific achievement, possibly even the height that the survival horror game has reached to date – if only those dinosaurs worked better. *Resident Evil 2* is a better game than this, as its intertwined story offers you a far more cerebral and satisfying challenge. *Dino Crisis* is still good, but not as good as it could – or should – have been. ★★

Nick Jones

Or you could try...

Silent Hill
Konami ★★★★★
A masterpiece of gothic horror.

Resident Evil 2
Capcom ★★★★★
The ultimate in survival horror.

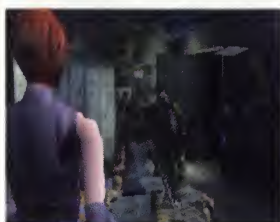


■ Those pesky lizards are around every corner. And in the kitchen cupboards.

■ Puzzle solving, dinosaur hunting and a strong plot are the things that make *Dino Crisis* what it is. A tried and trusted formula it may be, but it's still a welcome one.



■ Laser gates give you a certain amount of protection from the dino – if you're on the right side of them that is.





■ Questions are asked of your shooting abilities.

Game info

- Publisher: Konami
- Developer: Konami
- Price: £25
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1
- Extras: memory card, Dual Shock-compatible



■ No, you aren't imagining it – giant exploding gems.

METAL GEAR SPECIAL MISSIONS

ARE YOU DESPERATE FOR SOME MORE GEAR ACTION?

Sneaking around top secret installations, strangling hapless victims ninja-style while following a storyline of corruption, germ warfare and world domination was the stuff that made *Metal Gear Solid* one of the best games of last year. One of the unsung highlights of the game, however, was the VR Training mode, which was designed to introduce you to the basic skills you needed, but was surprisingly addictive when played as a time trial.

Now Konami has seized the opportunity to exploit this mode with a game almost entirely based on these highly stylised training missions.

In *Metal Gear Special Missions* you get more than 300 VR missions, incorporating every aspect of the full game, including stealth missions (with or without a weapon), individual weapons training with each of the game's eight different weapons, and a number



■ If you've played the original, you'll know what to expect.

stuff, but still in the theme of *Metal Gear Solid*. The stand-outs are the murder-mystery missions, where you are presented with a victim and a number of suspects – you're then given a clue as to who has committed the murder and must attempt to finger the culprit.

There's also a bizarre bonus that gives you the opportunity to take photos of Mei Ling, one of your contacts in *Solid*. Pictures can then be saved onto the memory card to be viewed at a later date. However, you'll have had to play the original game purely to see Meryl in her knickers to get any kind of gratification from this.

Special Missions can get frustrating at times, but always

in a good way – curse it you might, but you'll find it irresistible to hit that retry button. There's a decent learning curve and the missions are always interesting and imaginative.

CURSE THIS GAME YOU MIGHT, BUT YOU'LL FIND IT IRRESISTIBLE TO HIT THAT RETRY BUTTON.

of battle modes where you take on various guards, again with or without weapons.

You're also rewarded with bonus games, and this is where things get really interesting. The big bonus is that you get to play parts of the original game with the Ninja. But there's a lot more here besides: some original, quirky

It's great to see Konami releasing a game that has no kind of pretensions for a change; *Special Missions* knows exactly what it is – no stupid story lines, just pure, unadulterated fun. The cynical may point out that it is nothing more than a cash-in, but the Arcade office has fallen for it and *Metal Gear Solid* nuts will too. ★★★★★

Nick Jones

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Gold nugget

- More than 300 missions
- Lots of replay potential with time trials
- You get to play as the Ninja

Tin can

- Can become repetitive at times
- Won't take long to complete
- It's a bit too easy in places

Or you could try...

Syphon Filter
SCEE ★★★★★
Espionage action with a stealthy topping.

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus
GT Interactive ★★★★★
Puzzle solving with the loveable Abe.



TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING

EVERYTHING FROM NOSEBONES TO BROKEN BONES.

Game info

- Publisher: **Activision**
- Developer: **Neversoft**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2**
- Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible**



■ Customisable kit wins fashion points.



■ Tony Hawk's is all about outrageous, impossible stunts.

Like flared trousers, skateboarding is forever see-sawing in and out of fashion. Yet somehow the sport manages to attract the sort of die-hard following that ensures you'll spend every Saturday shopping trip for the rest of your life with one eye open for an out of control 13-year-old about to send their stick skidding towards your increasingly frail ankles.

What's so distressing about *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding*, then, is seeing the best skater in the world make like every equilibrially-challenged youngster you've ever guffawed at – albeit one with absolutely no conception of danger – and fumbling a ramp before landing teeth-first on the Tarmac. He's supposed to be a professional, after all, taking skateboarding a few steps on from the standard of going quite fast down a hill or nearly being able to ollie unaided.

But once you get used to straightening your board to land, and the feeling of skating like a pro is spot on. Pulling a handsome indy nosebone here and a kick-flip there will be no trouble. You'll then be able to gamble your finger skills against wiping out on bigger and better tricks as the camera follows your every twist and turn like a dream.

Two-player Graffiti mode, where you "paint" sections of the track by pulling off tricks, is tremendous. In order to steal points off you and win back sections, your opponent has to go one better on the same obstacle.

However, in order to open new tracks, you have to complete the previous one in single-player mode, which is where the game snags. The problem is that in single-player

mode you have to skate against a harsh time limit. In order to succeed you must fulfil criteria like grinding tables or skating up walls in order to smash tube maps. The poor race track-like design of the later levels forces you to skate like a madman to stand any chance of qualifying. But exploring the environment at leisure is far more fun. Like you do in the two-player and free-play modes, then.

In other words, you have to play through the chaff to reach the wheat, which is just a little too much skin off the knees to make *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* as great as it should have been. ★★★

Rich Pelley

Or you could try...

Cool Boarders 2
SCE ***
Skateboarding, only on snow, with plenty of tricks if you persevere.

Big Air
EA ***
More snow-based board antics, hampered by chronically unimaginative tracks.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Grind

- Smooth camera
- Plenty of tricks
- Great two-player mode

Bind

- Poor track design of later levels
- Annoying single-player

THE POOR RACE TRACK-LIKE DESIGN OF LATER LEVELS FORCES YOU TO SKATE LIKE A MADMAN.



■ The two-player battle mode is great.





■ Elves talk to animals. Right.

Game info

- Publisher: **SCEE**
- Developer: **Insomniac Games**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **memory card, Dual Shock**



■ Toast the bad guys with your fiery breath. Again.



Skeles Badlands Talisman

SPYRO 2: GATEWAY TO GLIMMER

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

On fire

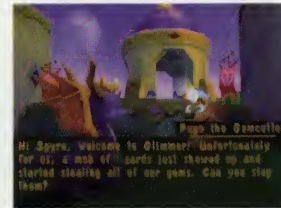
- Pretty visuals
- Tried and trusted gameplay
- Charming characters

Damp squib

- Too easy
- Collecting gems can get monotonous
- Seen it all before

■ Colourful, cute graphics are the order of the day. Works for the young, apparently.

SPYRO RETURNS IN A SEQUEL THAT OFFERS YOU MORE OF THE SAME.



Poor Spyro. After all that adventuring in the first game all he wanted was a holiday, and rightly so. Off he sets to Dragon Shores to soak up the rays. Imagine how annoyed he was to find himself summoned to the aid of the people of Avatar to help them banish the evil Ripto. I don't know, you do one good deed...

To be kind, *Spyro 2* stays faithful to the original and it's the perfect kiddie's platformer. The game is colourful, easy to pick up and nothing nasty happens – well at least without serious moral consequences.

However, a few game features have changed.

Levels now have primary and secondary goals; completing the primary goals are enough to take you through the game but completing secondary goals will give you bonuses. Your first tasks are usually to banish evil things from each of the worlds and, more often than not in the early levels, this just means reaching an end point. Not much challenge here. The secondary stuff is far better – this usually

takes the form of sub games. Examples of these include catching lightening stone thieves or putting a dinosaur's bones back together. These tasks usually take you all over the levels and offer something of a challenge.

Obviously you get to fight a few bosses here and there and eventually you head for one final showdown with Ripto. There's nothing inspirational, nothing original and certainly nothing to compete with the equivalent on N64.

While *Spyro 2* is distinctly aimed at the young, it's probably too easy for most people over the age of 12. There is very little here that hasn't been seen before and anyone with more than a few platform games under their belt will get bored very quickly. Still, *Spyro 2* is a well-made game; it has a certain charm to it with some lovely cartoon visuals and well-voiced characters.

It won't give you much of a challenge, but as a Christmas present for your younger sister or brother you really can't go wrong with this little cutie. ★★★

Nick Jones



■ A calming loading screen.



■ If you need help, there are plenty of people around to aid you.



■ These people have beards. They don't need the help of Spyro.

Or you could try...

Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped!
SCEE ***
Mad marsupial action. Easy but pretty platformer much in the same vein.

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus
GT Interactive ***
Marvellous 2D graphics and infuriating puzzles make this much more of a challenge.



■ (Left) It's freezing cold and has just snowed – let's off road.

■ (Right) Wait a minute... they're riding on the pavement!



NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

TAKE YOUR TESTICLES IN HAND AND FACE YOUR FEAR.

Anient Greeks faced up to death by competing in a variety of sporting events to prove their masculinity. Centuries later that tradition lives on in the hearts of the and minds of the MTV generation – albeit with a twist.

You're atop a feeble metal object with two wheels, commonly known as a bicycle – but in *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking* this mode of transport is referred to as the angel of death. You're looking down a cliff. Things aren't looking too tasty.

Set in 11 worldwide locations, this extreme racer sees you hightailing it past Yorkshire countryside, across Morocco and through San Francisco. If the element of doom wasn't involved, it would be a superb summer holiday. But each course is littered with natural obstacles and other riders who will do their utmost to beat you to the bottom. You get to choose between eight,

well-rounded riders and five racing modes: Single, Championship and Time Trial, and the multi-players Tournament and Duel, where winner stays on. There's also a hidden track to unlock.

The game is supposed to test nerves, skill and balance, but like others of its ilk it just tests how well you know the course. Once you get the hang of it, you can go back and test yourself at different difficulties. As the introduction says, Second Place Is First Loser. As if you didn't know.

To add insult to injury an old geezer decides to tell you that he and his friends "used to ride downhill on our faces". "We didn't need any bicycle," he continues. "Now that was extreme." All right grandad, put your teeth back in the cup. We believe you. ★★

Aleks Krotoski

Game info

- Publisher: **Codemasters**
- Developer: **UDS**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **19 November**
- Players: **1-4**
- Extras: **Dual Shock-compatible**



↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Wind in the hair

- High speed
- Vicious AI
- Suicide handlebar cam

Face in the dirt

- No exploration
- Unintuitive trick control

Or you could try...

Sled Storm
EA ★★
Mountain bikes? Yesterday's news. Why not go sledding instead?

Wipeout 3
Psygnosis ★★★★★
High speed action on floaty bikes. A must for serious litze-heads.

Also released

But only if you've got money to burn...

Words by | **Ben East**



DEMOLITION RACER

- Publisher: **Infogrames**
- Developer: **Pitbull Syndicate**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2 players**

■ Did *Destruction Derby* do the business for you? If so, this probably will too. Put together by the same team as the *Psygnosis* hit, *Demolition Racer* is basically *Destruction Derby 3*. Only not, because that comes out next year.

It's hard to get into this smash-'em-up. Slightly dated concept, you see, and you can get the same enjoyment driving the wrong way round one of *TOCA's* tracks. ★★



MADDEN NFL 2000

- Publisher: **EA Sports**
- Developer: **EA Sports**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-4**

■ There's no doubt that EA is getting rather good at sports games. *Triple Play Baseball 2000* has already been unleashed on the public, and the prospects for *FIFA 2000* are bright. So it comes as no surprise that *Madden NFL 2000* is easily the best gridiron sim on PlayStation. Its genius is that it makes the game simple for the armchair fans, yet provides statos with numbers aplenty. ★★★★★



PAC MAN WORLD

- Publisher: **Sony**
- Developer: **Namco**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2**

■ Two decades down the line and Pac Man still hasn't sated his appetite for those pacdots. Now, of course, he is a fully 3D character in his own 3D world... except not really. *Pac Man World* is one of those cheating platformers where you can only run in and out of the screen – forget any kind of *Mario 64*-style freedom. It's also repetitive, derivative and entertaining for about half an hour. ★★



RAINBOW SIX

- Publisher: **Take Two**
- Developer: **Rebellion**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **Dual Shock-compatible, memory card**

■ Is this the first game based on a book? Who knows, but it's difficult to get interested about anything surrounding this shoddy release based on Tom Clancy's bestseller. Great idea – playing hide and seek with your crack squad of troops – but it's terribly executed. The graphics are appalling and reek of pre-Christmas rush release. ★



STAR WARS EPISODE ONE: THE PHANTOM MENACE

- Publisher: **LucasArts**
- Developer: **LucasArts**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **Dual Shock-compatible, memory card**

■ Laughable. That's the only way to describe this disgusting third-person adventure – or should it be cash-'em-up? The fact that *Activision* rushed this game into the shops before anyone could review it should indicate how unspeakably bad it is. You'd be better off pod racing aboard the N64. ★



SPACE INVADERS

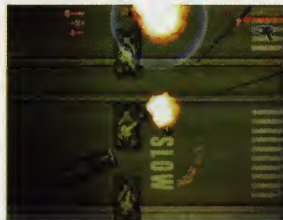
- Publisher: **Activision**
- Developer: **Z-Axis**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2**
- Extras: **Dual Shock-compatible, memory card**

■ New graphics, new bosses, new levels, but still the same old *Space Invaders*. Is anyone really so interested in retro gaming that they'd be willing to spend hard earned notes on a game far surpassed by the likes of *Omega Boost*? Obviously, but – with all due respect – they are mad and in need of financial counselling. ★

New PC Games



■ The police won't be too impressed with your showing off. They're more likely to shoot you in the head.



■ No 3D? GTA 2 is a better game for it.

Game info

- Publisher: Rockstar Games
- Developer: DMA Design
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-6 (LAN or Internet)
- Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM, 80Mb HD-space
- Recommended: P200, 32Mb RAM, 80Mb HD-space, 3D graphics card

GTA2

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Top down

- Open-ended
- Can drive every vehicle in the game
- Wicked sense of humour

Bottom out

- Lacks a definite direction
- Could have lasted a bit longer
- Too similar to the original?

JOYRIDING, DRUG DEALING AND MUH-DER. YES, GTA IS BACK...

Grand Theft Auto should be banned. Or at least it should be if you believe what the *Daily Mail* says, as it is proof that videogames are polluting the minds of our children. Well, it seems that the *Daily Mail* campaign has been devastatingly effective, because here comes the next instalment of the 18-rated, homicidal, bloodthirsty and brilliant *Grand Theft Auto*.

If you've never come across *Grand Theft Auto* before, try to picture a computer-generated gaming meltdown with *Taxi Driver*, the scene from *Heat* where Bobby DeNiro and his cronies take on the police with M16s and all the best gangster movies you've ever seen in the mix. You may also want to blend in a bit of *Blankety Blank* and *Strike It Lucky*. Oh, and you get to steal cars. Politically correct it isn't; fantastically funny it is.

Much has changed in the world of *Grand Theft Auto* since you first got to visit it two years ago. For starters, you are not the only crook in the city. There are muggers, car thieves and murderers lurking on every street corner. Not only will you see them committing crimes but you are as likely to be a victim as anyone else is in the city. Being carjacked is no laughing matter, believe you me...

The city is divided into three sectors, which equate to three game levels. Crime in the city is carved

up between a triumvirate of handily colour-coded gangland families, which control a patch of turf in each sector of town. To get work you have to earn the respect of one of the gangs. You do this by proving to them that you mean business – you are, after all, a nobody. A good way of aligning yourself with someone is by taking out their most hated enemy, and this is usually enough to get you an in.

Once you are working for one gang, the competition won't be too keen on you. Their henchmen will attack at any opportune moment, so you're better off staying out of their territory. Of course, there is a flip side and the gang you are helping will protect you with their lives – this can be extremely handy if you are being chased by The Fuzz.

Plenty else has changed. For starters, the police are a lot more hardcore. All you have to do is kill someone in front of them or merely broadside one of their cruisers and they want to acquaint your face with the road. They will also try plenty of other tactics to get your punk ass in cuffs. Unlike the law in *Driver* they will attempt to box you in or force you off the road – not just ram your car into submission. If this doesn't work, then roadblocks come into play. If you manage to avoid the roadblocks, then the SWAT teams are called in. If you manage to avoid them, then the Feds get involved. If you manage to avoid the FBI (which is highly unlikely), then the National Guard are called.

This is where things get heavy, as you have to take on tanks and marines – both in large quantities. And you will die. But hopefully not before you hop in to a tank and take

Arcade
PC
Game of
the Month





■ A simple meter shows your popularity with the gangs. Stray into the wrong turf and you'll get a "cap in your ass".



the war machine for a spin down the High Street, shelling all and sundry into submission...

These kinds of improvements are carried on through the game. For example, the citizens are a lot smarter and are all in a hurry to get somewhere. If this means that they have to take a taxi, bus or train, then that's what they'll do. It follows that if you steal a bus or taxi then you can pick up passengers and earn moolah ferrying them around. Indeed, you can complete *GTA2* just by working as a cabbie.

Missions are in the same vein as the original, and are often just a case of high-tailing it somewhere in the city within a certain time. However, there is a lot more scope to some of the tasks. An early example of this is when you are instructed to ferry your main man's favourite sports car across town – without a scratch, natch. Driving normally, you'll find this nigh on impossible. But if you steal a truck, find an empty trailer and a crane, and use the crane to lift the car on to the trailer, you can drive like a loon, safe in the knowledge that the truck will take all the damage. Clever.

This is the key to *GTA2*: it invites you to try anything and more often than not you'll find that it works. As a result,



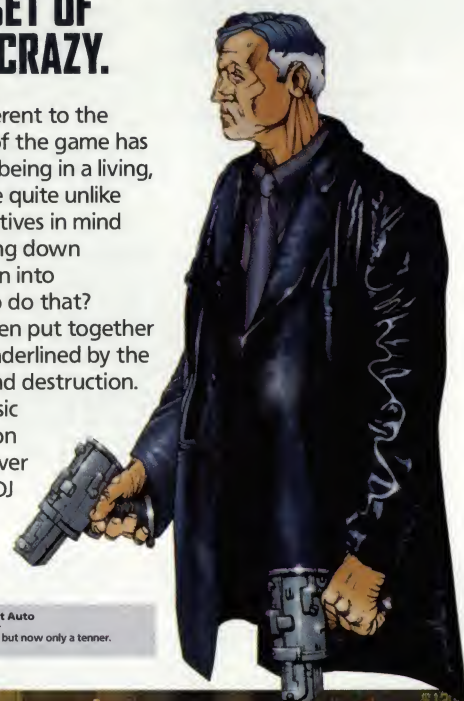
THIS IS A GAME UNLIKE ANY OTHER: YOU CAN PLAY IT WITH A SET OF OBJECTIVES, OR JUST GO CRAZY.

■ A 3D card isn't necessary, but it gives you all these lovely lighting effects.

GTA2 is a terrific game. It isn't massively different to the original, but, that said, almost every aspect of the game has been smoothly improved and the feeling of being in a living, breathing city is better than ever. It is a game quite unlike any other: you can play it with a set of objectives in mind or you can just go crazy: stealing cars, mowing down pedestrians and generally turning downtown into a war zone. How many games enable you to do that?

The icing on the cake is that *GTA2* has been put together with wonderfully dark humour, a feature underlined by the prevailing "game show" attitude to death and destruction. The handling of the cars is excellent, the music is spot on (DMA has retained the radio station theme of the original, whereby you are forever bombarded by a wide variety of tunes and DJ chatter) and the game is hugely inventive. A worthy update of a classic title. Buy immediately. ★★★★★

Nick Jones



Or you could try...

Driver
GT ★★★★★
Stunning-looking '70s car chase sim.

Grand Theft Auto
Take 2 ★★
The original, but now only a tenner.



■ Cause too much mayhem and they call the army in.



■ Of course, this means that you can steal a tank!



■ You can also hijack trains, just for the hell of it.

■ Be Bullitt, Stanley Kowalski, Starsky, Hutch and, er, Knight Rider, rolled into one.

Game info

■ Publisher: GTI
 ■ Developer: Reflections
 ■ Price: £35
 ■ Release date: on sale now
 ■ Players: 1
 ■ Requires: P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D accelerator card
 ■ Recommended: P350, 64Mb RAM

DRIVER

IT'S '70S SAN FRAN AND THE SCENE'S WILD. BUT THE DRIVING'S WILDER.

Driver is wallowing in the sort of public profile normally enjoyed by coke-snorting royals, soap actors and blond-haired footballers. An advertising blitz and incalculable sales of the PlayStation version have ensured GTI's drive-'em-up is being talked about by everyone from Mrs Enid Giddings of Rose Cottage, Land's End to "Mad" Hamish McPherson of John O'Groats. And now, with the appearance of the PC version, everyone from the windswept shores of East Anglia to the dampest recesses of Wales will end up spending some of their spare time musing over how tough the driving test is.

The joy of this is that the game deserves the attention. The key is the concept of the whole package. Driving games of the past had you racing around purpose-built circuits, but *Driver* plonks you behind the wheel in a cityscape reminiscent of great cinematic car chases.

Another masterstroke was to transpose everything into '70s America. So, instead of tautly handling BMWs and

YOU CAN'T NEGOTIATE EVEN THE GENTLEST CORNER WITHOUT SHEDDING HALF YOUR HUB CAPS.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Doing crime

■ Spot-on handling
 ■ Chipper graphics
 ■ An invigorating change

Doing time

■ Boring FMV clips
 ■ Missions a bit samey
 ■ Midtown Madness

Porsches, you have to wrestle with squidgy, interior-sprung American barges with unwieldy V8 engines. You can't negotiate even the gentlest corner without shedding half your hub caps in a typhoon of

tyre smoke, your rear end flailing helplessly as your tyres struggle to grip. The precision with which these beasts have been simulated makes for a tremendous spectacle as you slew through red lights and slam expensively into oncoming traffic. Superb graphics – far more detailed on the PC than on the PlayStation – complete the cinematic feel.

Driver is a mission-based game, rather than a straight racer. A slightly hokey plot has you playing an undercover cop masquerading as a criminal. By turns you find yourself working as a getaway driver, an arms trafficker and a demolitionist. All in the name of the law, of course. But the boys in blue don't seem to have been informed of this, and harry you at every turn. You can either try to evade them by stealth – blending in with the rush-hour traffic – or simply floor it and hope to shake them off.

In the course of your erratic travels you pass through four American cities: Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. Each has been lovingly reconstructed to include landmarks such as the Hollywood sign and the Statue of Liberty, and each has its own unique atmosphere.

A potential flaw in the game is that you can reach the final mission in New York pretty quickly. But you'll have missed out loads of levels along the way – you frequently find several offers of work on your answering machine, and have to choose between them. And even when you've finished the lot, there's a whole selection of bonus games, ranging from knock-over-all-the-cones to survive-the-attentions-of-four-cop-cars-for-as-long-as-you-can. You get a lot of game for your money.

But while it may have cleaned up on the PlayStation, *Driver* faces a formidable opponent on the PC: *Midtown Madness*. Microsoft's take on the urban carnage theme gives you twice as pretty graphics, five times as much traffic to play high-street snooker with and ten times as many laughs. Get *Midtown Madness* if you really want to get road rage out of your system. ★★★★★ *Cam Anderson*

Or you could try...

Midtown Madness
 Microsoft ★★★★★
 A more conventional racing game, but with the best crashes you've ever seen.

Interstate 76
 Activision ★★
 Similar '70s cars idea, but goes a bit mad with weapons and isn't much fun.



■ Night missions show off *Driver's* stylistic detail in full.



■ A novel way to test your motor's suspension.



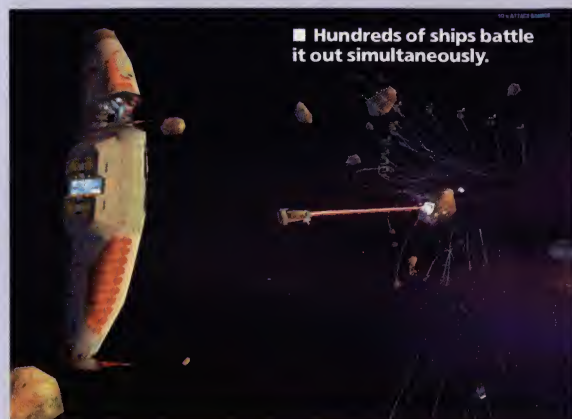
■ Gone in 60 Seconds? You've got rather less than that.

HOMEWORLD

FANCY COMMANDING AN ARMY IN SPACE? DO IT YOURSELF.

Game info

■ Publisher: **Sierra**
 ■ Developer: **Relic**
 ■ Price: **£35**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-8 (Internet/LAN)**
 ■ Requires: **P200, 32Mb RAM**
 ■ Recommended: **P266, 3D accelerator card**



■ Hundreds of ships battle it out simultaneously.



■ In space, no-one can hear you crap yourself.



■ This thing destroys planets. Handle with care.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Alien

■ Inspired concept
 ■ Jaw-dropping battles
 ■ Real-time strategy compulsiveness

Species 2

■ Slow-down at the limit
 ■ Weird cartoon sequences
 ■ A mere 16 missions

The thing about *Homeworld* is that, although it looks like an action-packed space shoot-'em-up, it's actually a real-time strategy game. And a space shoot-'em-up. It's ingenious, awe-inspiring and huge fun, and will probably be accorded a glass case of its own in the videogames hall of fame.

On first inspection, *Homeworld* seems to consist solely of 3D spaceships of all shapes and sizes zapping each other among the heavens. Except, rather than just flying one of them, you control them all. And you do it *Command & Conquer* style. You click and drag to select ships; you assign formations of fighters to the number keys; you click on enemies to attack them; you harvest asteroids to build more ships; and you research the technology you encounter along the way.

Naturally, this raises a number of knotty issues to do with camera angles and the fact that in space there's no real up and down, to say nothing of a north, south, east or west. But this problem has been cunningly resolved by Canadian new-kid-on-the-block Relic, which has resorted to structuring various mouse and key combinations, together with a 3D map, for strategic planning. The game also features a series of training missions to help you get your head round the finger-gymnastics you'll need to develop to cope with simultaneously attacking aliens swooping in from every direction.

Imagine, then, the compelling resource management and order-issuing of something like *Starcraft*, combined with dazzling space battles that have 100 or 200 ships at it hammer and tongs. The polygon count for each ship has

bombs and death rays, the overall effect is staggering.

And, like the best real-time strategy games, the missions in *Homeworld* join up to tell a story, giving you an extra incentive to keep playing. The game begins with the discovery in the desert of your planet, Kharak, of the wreck of an ancient spaceship. A bit of detective work reveals that your ancestors were spacefarers, and were exiled to Kharak by conquering aliens. After careful study of the wreckage, and a bit of guesswork, a mothership is built and you set off in search of – here it comes – your homeworld. What follows is a good deal of wandering the universe and encountering friendly alien races and not-so-friendly alien races, enduring political problems such as defections and double-crossing. You also get to front up to some particularly scary baddies, who grab your ships and attempt to drag them off towards wormholes. Most of the plot is related using the game engine, as it should be, although you will encounter some odd black-and-white cartoons from time to time.

After a weekend of solid play, *Arcade* managed to reach mission 13 out of 16 with worrying ease, which suggests *Homeworld* will only really come in to its own as a multi-player game. But with spooky music, excellent sound effects (zoom in on a frigate and you can hear the whine of its gun turrets swivelling), and pilots who occasionally say: "I've got a bad feeling about this", *Homeworld* still manages to be one of the defining PC games of '99. ★★★★★

Jonathan Davies

Or you could try...

Starcraft
 Zblac ★★★★★
 A life-consuming strategy-in-space affair, but in a 2D way.

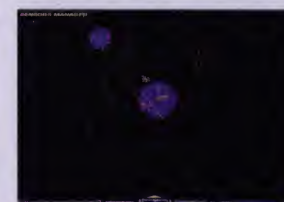
Star Wars: X-wing Alliance
 LucasArts ★★★★★
 No strategy at all, but plenty of spaceships shooting each other.



■ Most story sequences use the impressive game engine.

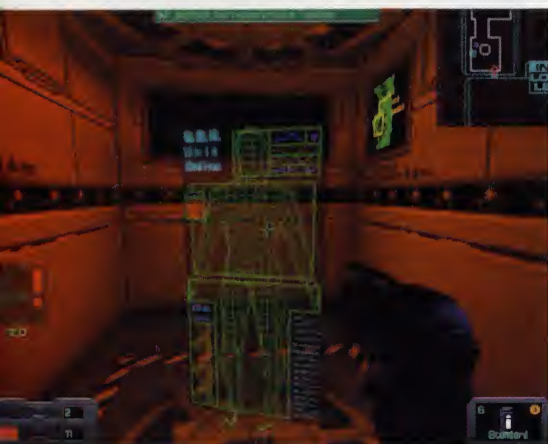


■ That planet would make for a great penal colony.





■ Reconstruction machines will reform you if you foolishly let yourself be killed.



Game info

- Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
- Developer: **Looking Glass/Irrational**
- Price: **£35**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1 (1-4 with patch)**
- Requirements: **P200, 32Mb RAM, 200Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 4Mb D3D card**
- Recommended: **sound card**

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

IN SPACE, NO-ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM.

Most cult classics only end up with the title because certain social incompetents demand a badge to prove their wacky individuality. They often prove to be nothing more than sickening smears on the pristine white wall of entertainment, but there are exceptions.

System Shock is as good an example of a cult classic as any. Released at around the same time as *Doom*, the game startled the critics with its visionary brilliance and seduced a band of devoted apostles. In Britain it sold approximately eight copies. It was enough to turn decent fellows into raving misanthropes, but now the sequel has arrived...

System Shock 2 is an action/RPG hybrid, and melds the action and looks of a first-person shooter with the character and inventory management skills of a real RPG. Oh yes, and there's plenty of the stomach-somersaulting horror that *The Exorcist* managed to generate among teenaged Catholic girls in the '70s thrown in for good measure.

Unless you opt to dabble in the Internet co-operative multi-player patch, you play a single character stranded aboard a starship stuck in deep space. You awake to find the entire crew butchered, a gaping space where your memories should be and a load of expensive cybernetic kit inserted into your body. You have no idea what's going on.

From this clichéd opening stretches an epic, emotion-bombarding story. What makes it all the more effective is the way the game puts you in the picture. Cut scenes have been completely disregarded, and instead you piece together what has happened via snippets of horrifying audio-logs, e-mails or spectral figures playing through the final moments of their lives. Also, as in *Half-Life*, you never

lose control of your character and so you are rarely reminded that you're playing a videogame.

This effect is increased by a brilliant audio performance. Building on the aural depth achieved in *Thief: The Dark Project*, Looking Glass has created a soundtrack that strides between cacophonous excesses and painfully quiet voids. *System Shock 2* is an expert torturer, incessantly applying a cheese-grater to your nerves. Expect to jump. A lot.

If *System Shock 2* has a fault, it's that it's damn difficult. As you progress, the challenges become more and more trying. You can, for example, happen across a gun, but you first have to check the thing is working and fix it if it's not. But the title's strength lies in the same area. This isn't a game where you can happily stroll around wiping out the bad guys. Instead, you drown in options.

Three character types are available: Marine, Navy and OSA, which present aggressive, technical and psychically aided routes to success. However, once you start playing you're given the opportunity to employ skills from any group, leading to the amassing of a patchwork of possible solutions to problems you may encounter. Examples? Hack into security systems. Modify weapons. Take over defence turrets. Maintain your guns. Select the correct ammunition. Research the organs of your foes. Telekinetically move objects with your mind. Fight. Kill. Think. Conquer. Survive.

Drawbacks? It's a little short. But so was Napoleon, and he conquered most of the known world. *System Shock 2* could do the same. ★★★★★

Simon Garner

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Terror

- Horrifying atmosphere
- Multiple fathom depth
- Confident genre mixing

Terrible

- All too short
- Cerebrally demanding
- Looks like a shooter but isn't one. Damn it



■ Dead people. *SS2*'s favourite, recurring theme.

Or you could try...

Thief: The Dark Project
Looking Glass/Eidos ★★★★★
The PC's premier sneak-'em-up. Its pure stealth dynamics are unparalleled.

Half-Life
Sierra ★★★★★
The PC's premier game. A rollercoaster of terror and adrenaline. Get it.

■ The AI has improved immeasurably. No longer will cul de sacs fool your crack squad.

RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR

SERIOUS FUN FOR THE SOLDIER-SIM CONNOISSEUR.

The problem with nigh-on creating a genre with one of your titles, then following it up with a game that takes it to its limits is: what happens next? This plight seems to have befallen Take Two, which was almost solely responsible for bringing you the soldier-sim in the form of *Spec Ops*. Then came the far better – if subtly-flawed – *Rainbow Six*. The mistake? Following both games with *Hidden And Dangerous* – the best soldier sim bar none.

This was a serious error, especially given that *Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear* – a full sequel rather than a mission pack – only looks good in comparison. Without *Hidden* to live up to, this title would've been crowned king. But everyone makes mistakes, and while those in *Rogue Spear* are fairly common, the game's strengths easily outweigh its occasional faults.

What *Rogue Spear* offers you is the opportunity to take control of an elite group of counter-terrorist commandos on a whistle-stop tour of real-world hot-spots. Your mission is to counter the threat posed to

national security by political reactionaries and save hostages, à la *GoldenEye*, at the same time.

Essentially you get two games for your money: a tactics title and a

first-person shooter. The massively in-depth (and in truth, slightly tedious) planning section has you plot battlefield paths for your various team-members, equip them with weapons and set points at which they should deploy things like smoke bombs. The far more enjoyable first-person shooter enables you to take direct control of any one of your team members, sneak around like a cat-burglar at a security convention and attempt to take on the masked terrorists yourself.

Rogue Spear uses a modified version of its prequel's engine, and as such the graphics are only slightly more advanced than those of *Rainbow Six* (most of the scenery still can't be destroyed). Although there are improvements to artificial intelligence – to the extent where closely following team members no longer get flummoxed by a narrow cul de sac – enemy AI is frustratingly good. Fluff a shot in a face-to-face scenario, and it's almost certainly game over for your character. Realistic, certainly, but enjoyable? Not always.

In fact, most of *Rogue Spear* follows just such a contrary path. While the experience seems laudably authentic, giving you a real feel for anti-terrorist techniques, it falls short of the all-enveloping atmosphere of *Hidden And Dangerous*. 3D shooters don't come much more complex than *Rogue Spear*, and if you want to work for your fun it comes highly recommended. Just don't expect an easy ride. ★★ ★★

Matthew Pierce

Or you could try...

Rainbow Six
Red Storm ★★ ★★
Rogue Spear's precursor is looking a bit dated now. Weaker missions, graphics, and some hilarious AI.

Hidden And Dangerous
Take Two ★★ ★★
The ultimate soldier sim, and one of the best PC games currently available. Pity about the occasional bugs though.

Game info

■ Publisher: Take Two
■ Developer: Red Storm
■ Price: £40
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-16
■ Requires: P233, 32Mb RAM, 3D accelerator card
■ Recommended: PIII300, 64Mb RAM



■ The choices of environment are more imaginative, but are mediocre looks-wise.



■ Flying the dragon gives you a new slant on the genre.



DRAKAN

■ Publisher: GT Interactive
■ Developer: Psygnosis
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-8
■ Minimum specs: P166, 32Mb RAM, 300Mb HD-space, 3D accelerator card
■ Recommended specs: PII 233, 32Mb RAM, 400Mb HD-space

■ Every man and his dog has played *Tomb Raider*, not least the developer of *Drakan* – or at least that's what first impressions lead you to believe. The third person perspective, the nubile young Lara-lookalike (right down to the ponytail). It's all too familiar to be a coincidence...

Things don't get much more original when the plot is revealed: you're on a quest to restore order to the world of Drakan. Traverse the levels, find the sacred stones and defeat the evil warlord – you know the type of thing. However, what sets *Drakan* apart from the growing crowd of Lara wannabes is that you get to fly, and seeing as this is fantasy your steed is a mighty dragon. This feature adds much needed variety to the proceedings – mid-air fighting is a new challenge and exploration of levels takes on a pleasantly different form.

This fantasy take on the genre is actually closer to a game like *Heretic 2* than dear old *Tomb Raider*. However, this proves something of a handicap as the game ends up falling between the fantasy and *Tomb Raider* genres and suffers as a result. That said, if you're gagging for a bit of adventure, this should distract you until *The Last Revelation* is released. *Drakan* is a decent enough game and is definitely worth a look.

★★★

Nick Jones

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Send in the SAS

■ It's as in-depth as you want it to be
■ Mission locations are inspired
■ Realism even extends to projectile physics

Send out an SOS

■ The planning sections are daunting
■ Lacks graphical polish
■ Frustrating AI



■ Being a member of the Persian royal family is a dangerous business.



■ (Above) Ouch. You could have someone's eye out with that.
■ (Below) *En garde*. A multitude of hideous ruffians await the feeling of cold steel next to their skin.



Game info

■ Publisher: Mindscape
■ Developer: Red Orb Entertainment
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1
■ Requires: P233, 64Mb RAM, 300Mb HD-space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 3D accelerator card
■ Recommended: P300

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

LARA'S MUSE STAKES HIS OWN CLAIM TO FAME.



■ He's a cool swingin' hep-cat with all the chicks.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A GAME THAT'S LIGHT ON TOMBS AND TITS, THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE TO COME.



■ Having a large spike up the bottom is not good news.

The maxim that history is written by the victor is as appropriate in videogames as anywhere else. You'd be forgiven for thinking that Capcom's *Resident Evil* was an original, ground-breaking game. However, it turns out that the zombie horror classic is strikingly similar to Infogrames' *Alone In The Dark* series, which has essentially the same control system, interface, atmosphere and setting – including the zombies.

Likewise, you may not realise that *Tomb Raider*, in all its chesty wonderfulness, owes a significant debt to *Prince Of Persia*, a decade-old 2D platformer. Admittedly, Ms Croft was modelled in frighteningly realistic 3D, but the spikes, the collapsing floors, the leaping, the hanging from cliffs and the slamming into walls had been done before by Jordan Mechner and his poncey Middle Eastern prince. Therefore it's something of a surprise that Mechner (who worked on

Prince of Persia 3D in an advisory capacity) has taken so long to help transform the title into 3D.

Prince of Persia 3D picks up where its predecessor left off, and you play a young royal who once again finds himself locked up for crimes he did not commit. From there it's a simple matter of finding the loose block in your cell wall and legging it to freedom. Over 15 remarkably large levels, you'll hop, skip, and jump across chasms, step on switches to activate doors, step carefully past retracting floor spikes, push huge stone blocks around and engage in combat with the evil Vizier's troops.

While much of the gameplay will be familiar to fans of the original series (or *Tomb Raider*, depending upon your vintage), you'll soon clock that this is no straightforward retro-fest. *Prince 3D* is very much a modern game; the levels

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Ali Baba
■ Huge quest
■ Great Middle Eastern soundtrack
■ Lovely visuals

The 40 Thieves
■ Pretty tough
■ Steep hardware requirements
■ Some unfair leaps of faith

are well designed, there are some impressive locales and lighting effects, and some particularly successful textures. The animation, in-keeping with the original *Prince Of Persia's* pioneering

"rotoscoping" (whatever that was), is suitably smooth.

As is fashionable nowadays, *Prince 3D* places heavy emphasis on stealth, and you are required to evade guards prior to retrieving the prince's sword (which he seems to refer to as "Mr Slice"). However, combat is inevitable and the swordplay helps set the title apart from the competition. In addition to your sabre, you'll ultimately come into possession of a bow and arrow, which you can power-up to fire magical bolts. You also get a long stick of wood – less sophisticated perhaps, but extremely effective.

Like its forebear, *Prince 3D* is fiendishly tough. Save points are well spaced through the game, and it's all to easy to sprint into a seemingly empty room while hot-footing it from an enraged palace guard – only to be decapitated by a wall blade that leaps out to meet you at the neck. Occasionally you can't help but feel the game's being a bit unfair, but after having played for a while you swiftly tune in to the warning signs, which include blood stains on the floor, curious protrusions from the walls and the like.

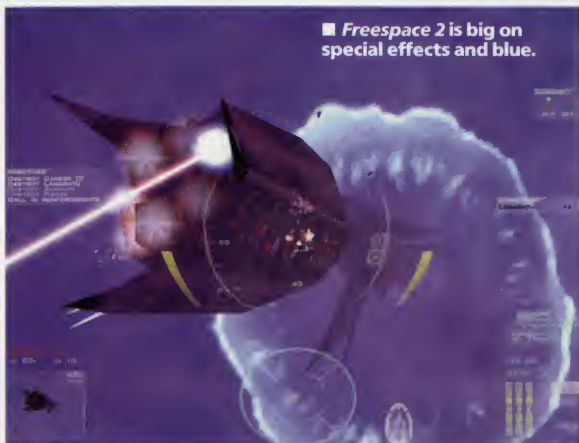
While it may seem inappropriate to continually compare the game to *Tomb Raider*, there's no escaping it. If you're looking for a challenging *Tomb Raider*-style game that's light on tombs and tits, this is the only place to come.

While *Prince of Persia 3D* is no magic carpet of a videogame it sure beats rubbing your lamp – until Lara makes her triumphant return, that is. ★★★ **Paul Rose**

Or you could try...

Tomb Raider 3
Edos ★★★★★
All-round gob-smackingly gorgeous.

Drakkar
GT ★★★★★
Woman with sword in woods solving problems.



Freespace 2

■ Publisher: Interplay
■ Developer: Volition
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-16
■ Requires: P200, 32Mb RAM, 400Mb HD-space, 3D accelerator card
■ Recommended: P266, 64Mb RAM

Ever since LucasArts presented the *Star Wars X-Wing* games there hasn't been much innovation in the space combat genre. *Freespace 2* can't claim to have changed that state of affairs – it's a by-the-book combat game that follows the established pattern of mission, story, mission almost religiously.

The scenario is certainly nothing new: set in the year 2367,

there is a war going on between humans and invading alien races and, yes, you get to play the lone pilot against the lot of them. Well, not quite, as you have control over wingmen and other tactical ships, but to all intents and purposes it's you against the world.

In the process you get to fly everything from small fighters to some of the larger battle cruisers and the weaponry on offer is

impressive. Missions are pretty standard, but take a few twists and turns as things develop. Battles can get heated very quickly and this unpredictability keeps you from nodding off. *Freespace 2* is at its best in the later missions where it generates some gigantic space battles, and things can get intense.

But while there is a lot of straightforward combat action,

Freespace 2 also demands you show strategic skill marshalling the forces at your command.

The cliché "if you like this kind of game then you'll love this" certainly applies here. There are plenty of missions to get your teeth into, the story is mildly engaging (if you're into your B-movie sci-fi) and it looks good. While *Freespace 2* is nothing special, it has its moments. ★★

Also released

Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. But no Quake? Be serious.

Words by Dave Bradley



BLACK MOON CHRONICLES

■ Publisher: Cryo
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-2

Previously underestimated in the UK, Paris outfit Cryo makes a brave stab at the role-play/strategy crossover genre with this top-down wargame. Borrowing plot and style from a successful French comic strip, you get to prepare an army for four huge campaigns. You can develop and recruit soldiers, gaining experience points in the process. If only the interface wasn't so user-unfriendly, and the point-click-splat fighting so repetitive. ★★



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2

■ Publisher: Eidos
■ Price: £13
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1

For several years this was far and away the most popular choice for PC-using soccer management fans. It will run on the lowest of low spec machines, but *Championship Manager 2* has enough behind-the-scenes data to excite natural born number-crunchers. There are 20 attribute categories, all hyperlinked for easy reference. Commentary from Clive Tyldesley and an intuitive tactics editor round the package off neatly. ★★



DARKSTONE

■ Publisher: EA
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-8

Beautifully designed, and featuring fantastically cinematic visuals, *Darkstone* is the French riposte to *Diablo*. It employs a fluid 3D camera system, well-animated characters and an accessible mouse-driven interface. You also get to control two characters, as opposed to the regulation loner. Sadly this is betrayed by a dreary storyline and some uninspiring gameplay. Still, newcomers should rate the technical wizardry on show. ★★



DIABLO

■ Publisher: Sierra Originals
■ Price: £15
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-16

Despite commonplace on-line cheating and its repetitive combat system, *Diablo* has become one of the most popular PC role-playing games. This can be credited to the detailed isometric viewpoint, an inventive array of magical goods, and expert level-design by Blizzard. A sequel has been inching hither for aeons, but you'll still find a battalion of enthusiasts playing the original over the wires. Quality multi-playing and no mistake. ★★



GRAND PRIX 2

■ Publisher: MicroProse Powerplus
■ Price: £10
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-8

Geoff Grammond's classic is worth a look at, if only so you can get in some practice for the forthcoming sequel. One of the best 3D driving efforts available, *Grand Prix 2* boasts an authentic physics model and a fully tweakable car. Racing is quirky if you're a newbie, but hardcore fans will appreciate the challenge. The graphics have aged, but this remains the experts' choice. ★★



LEGO RACERS

■ Publisher: Lego Media
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-2

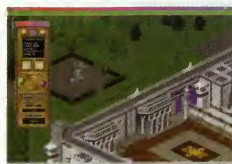
Entertaining? Yes. The PC's answer to *Super Mario Kart*? No. Lego's first driving title contains 12 primary-coloured tracks set across four chunky environments. The levels are short and twisty, but suit two-player split-screen racing. An oversight is the lack of LAN networking options. However, plentiful power-ups in the shape of floating Lego bricks keeps races challenging. You also get to build your own Lego vehicles. ★★



MAYDAY

■ Publisher: PBH
■ Price: £30
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-4

Et voilà – another C&C done. This one is set in the 21st century and three superpowers are squabbling over global supremacy. Gameplay refinements like the introduction of espionage and weapons research are pleasing, and there are 40 missions on offer. The old-fashioned graphics and limited AI, however, add little to the genre, making the game feel clunky and uninspiring. This would have challenged *Red Alert* three years ago. ★★



SHATTERED LIGHT

■ Publisher: Zablaac
■ Price: £20
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-8

Set in the mythical world of Delos, this isometric RPG uniquely ships with a design-it-yourself level editor. However, the editing tools are clumsy and the worlds you create always look and play the same. The single-player adventure offers a choice of eight character classes and hundreds of monsters to battle, but the interface is amateurish and is patched together from standard desktop windows. Get *Diablo* instead. ★



SIMON THE SORCERER 1 AND 2

■ Publisher: Adventuresoft
■ Price: £20
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1

The two *Simon The Sorcerer* games were Britain's answer to *Monkey Island*. In style and tone they owe a lot to *Discworld* as well, but despite the voice talents of the likes of Eric Idle failed to be more than "me too" games. However, they are straightforward point-and-click fun. You get two titles in one pack, but both versions show their age. Note that LucasArts is about to release a slew of budget titles. ★★



STARFLEET COMMAND

■ Publisher: Interplay
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1-6

Based on '70s board game *Star Fleet Battles*, *Starfleet Command* is a battle sim set in the *Star Trek* universe. At the core of the game is the puzzling assumption that space battles will be like naval battles. Played in real-time, the ships circle one another on a single plane like supertankers captained by Mogadon addicts. The ship animations are attractive and the scenarios are pure *Trek*, but the gameplay is overly complex. ★★



TRAITOR'S GATE

■ Publisher: Zablaac
■ Price: £35
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1

Spanning four CDs, *Traitor's Gate* is a pre-rendered *Myst*-like aimed at the family market. Your job is to break into the Tower of London and save the Crown Jewels from art thieves by stealing them yourself. The Tower is fully mapped, and many of the puzzles require the use of some entertaining James Bond-style gadgets. Nevertheless, the game is dull and the interface clumsy. Best filed under multimedia and reserved for history lovers. ★★



ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 98

■ Publisher: Sierra Originals
■ Price: £10
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Players: 1

Given the shadow cast by the *Championship Manager* series, can any football management sim win admirers? *USM98* certainly has a crack at it. An isometric in-match viewpoint brings you in close to the action, although the game is let down by some inane commentary. In the virtual office *USM98* doesn't improve much on *USM2*, but the interface is functional and you get regular missions. ★★

New Nintendo 64 Games

Arcade
Nintendo 64
Game of
the Month



■ Storming the enemy base. Blinding.



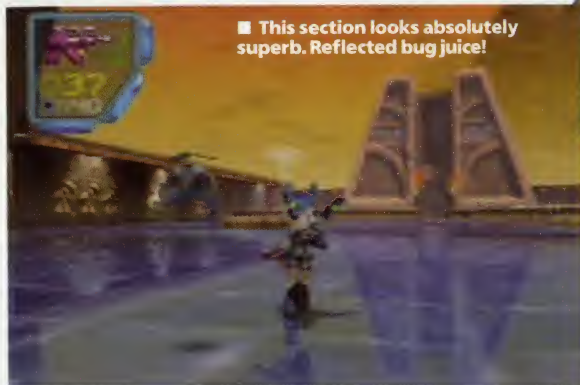
■ The new Juno: grown-up bugslayer.



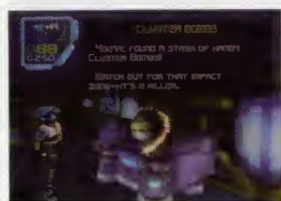
■ Surveying Mizar's asteroid hideout.



■ Where now? Try reading the signs...



■ This section looks absolutely superb. Reflected bug juice!



■ Remember *Galaxian*? Look out for some familiar alien formations.

JET FORCE GEMINI

GIVE FREE REIN TO YOUR INSECTICIDAL TENDENCIES.

Remember the days when a shoot-'em-up was a real gamer's game; the kind of thing you'd pump coins into at the arcade and come away from sweating and shaking, as if the lifeless lump of plastic and silicon had just given you a good slap in the face? Well, someone at Rare evidently does. The secretive British coder has been working on *Jet Force Gemini* for more than two years, and after lengthy delays caused by redesign this futuristic blast from the past is finally here for your delectation.

And fortunately for Nintendo, the N64 and shoot-'em-up connoisseurs everywhere, it's absolutely stunning. Playing like a cross between Factor 5's Amiga classic *Turrican* and a nandrolone-enhanced version of *Body Harvest*, *Jet Force Gemini* is arguably the best game to appear on the 64-bit system since *Zelda*.

The premise is simple: playing as one of three hardened space adventurers, you have to fight your way through a series of huge 3D levels to defeat the evil Mizar and save a beleaguered race of peace-loving bears, the Tribals. Along the way, you'll get to use a selection of satisfyingly destructive weapons to tear Mizar's bug-like hordes into scraps of green goo and thousands of flying limbs.

It isn't subtle. Unleash a homing missile into a crowd of insectoid drones and you'll be treated to a fantastic shower of unidentifiable body parts or, if you prefer the more refined method, you can line up a couple of them with a shuriken and lop off their heads as neatly as you like. The poor Tribals suffer equally, since they're often positioned next to explosive barrels or in the middle of a mob of

bloodthirsty assassin drones. The aim of the game may be to rescue them, but taking out your frustration on a few of the wide-eyed furballs after you've died a couple of times trying to

save a particularly tricky one proves from time to time to be a thoroughly therapeutic activity.

Initially at least, *Jet Force* seems worryingly short. The three characters make their separate ways to Mizar's palace within the space of little more than 12 hours of hectic gameplay – hardly what you'd expect from the end product of such a protracted development period. However, the game soon reveals the sting in its tail as Mizar does a runner and Juno, Vela and Lupus get the opportunity to explore levels which could previously be played by only one of them. Huge secret areas are revealed, whole new sections become accessible, and you can get your hands on the the full bug-splatter arsenal.

There's plenty of incentive to explore every nook and cranny, as you'll find such treats as a *Wipeout*-style racing game and an alien nightclub – complete with a mini arcade machine and a DJ who takes requests. The bonus games can be played as multi-player races, and there's a token deathmatch thrown in for good measure, extra levels and characters which you find in the solo adventure. It isn't in the same league as *GoldenEye*, thanks to the slightly awkward third-person camera, but it's a nice little extra.

As you'd expect from a Rare game, the graphics are spectacular. There isn't a hint of fogging – except when it's used as an atmospheric effect on one of the levels – and real-time shadows and reflections are handled without slowdown, even when the screen is filled with enemies and explosions. The landscapes seem to stretch for miles, and the bad guys are frighteningly smart too. They'll certainly give you a run for your money on the later levels.

As a straight shoot-'em-up, *Jet Force* is about as good as it gets – big, ballsy and heart-thumpingly exciting. Throw in a hefty slice of platform exploration, puzzles, a fantastic soundtrack and the best visuals on the N64, and you've got an instant classic. Buy it. ★★★★★

Martin Kitts

Game info

- Publisher: **Rare**
- Developer: **Rare**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-4**
- Extras: **Rumble Pak**



MAGICAL TETRIS CHALLENGE

- Publisher: **Capcom**
- Developer: **Capcom**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2**
- Extras: **Rumble Pak**

How come Goofy gets to strut around fully clothed and eat in fancy restaurants while Pluto has to live naked in a kennel? And why does Mickey wear trousers, but no shirt? As for Donald... so much for the childlike innocence of the Disney universe.

Anyway, it seems Capcom has picked up the licence to produce a line of Disney-themed titles, along with the rights to make a number of new *Tetris* games. To this end, the company has logically combined the two, producing *Magical Tetris Challenge* featuring Mickey Mouse and the rest of the two-dimensional team.

Over the years many *Tetris* spin-offs have bastardised the original version of the classic puzzler, introducing needless elements from exploding bricks to power-ups. So it's a refreshing change to find that *Magical Tetris Challenge* hasn't toyed too much with the format. What you get are the familiar oddly-shaped blocks dropping down from the sky, which you must manoeuvre into lines – which then disappear. It's deceptively addictive.

In *Magical Tetris Challenge* you are treated to an ongoing story mode in which you, in the guise of the Mickster, must face-off against other Disney characters in simulated multi-player battles. In a departure from the original format, you get a number of new block shapes to grapple with, but original *Tetris* is still there – sans ten-brick monsters.

Magical Tetris Challenge is achingly twee and pretty (though the music is quirky), but few concessions have been made to modernity. No 3D nonsense, no power-ups, pure *Tetris*. ★★★ **Paul Rose**

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Lock and load

- Outstanding graphics
- Plenty of secrets
- Gallons of gore

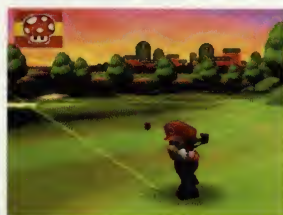
Out of ammo

- So-so multi-player
- Tricky controls
- No human enemies

Or you could try...

Lylat Wars
Nintendo ★★★★★
Until now, the best all-out blaster you could buy. Available at a knock-down price too.

Body Harvest
Nintendo ★★★★★
A similarly epic concept, let down slightly by some dodgy visuals. Great fun though.



■ Now golf needn't merely be a good walk ruined; you can wreck your home life too.

Game info

- Publisher: Nintendo
- Developer: Camelot
- Price: £45
- Release Date: on sale now
- Players: 1-4
- Extras: Rumble Pak, Transfer Pak

MARIO GOLF

MARIO GOES FORE IT ON THE FAIRWAY.

Striking the balance between *Tiger Woods* and *Beavis and Butthead* is a dumpy dungaree-wearing plumber with a posh pastime. Nintendo's macho mascot Mario is about to drive straight into your home.

Let's face it, golf caters to gluttons for punishment. Get this eensy ball into that eensy hole a mile away using this long mallet. It's asking for fairway rage.

Nevertheless, the sport founded on these shores has been adopted by the Japanese and moved to cuter pastures. *Mario Golf* is here, in glorious Technicolor.

Developer Camelot is no stranger to the sandy pit. The company was responsible for the well-received *Hot Shots Golf* for the PlayStation, which caused problems for hardcore gamers who found themselves addicted to what appeared to be a child's game. Well, not far off the path, *Mario Golf* is intended for children aged 8-14, as well as the older 19-plus crowd. The bleak teenage years are unaccounted for due to the distinct absence of misery and despair on show in this game.

Choose a club, take aim, account for velocity, calculate wind speed and shoot. Shoot your ball out into the stars and fields and mountains with eyeballs. Revel in the sort of cheerful colours found in children's playrooms and depression units of psychiatric hospitals. And then take a step back and discover that beneath the cutesy surface lies a golfing sim intricate enough to make a Masters champion

break out in a cold sweat, turn to his caddy in despair and stand over the ball long enough to count the dimples.

Start tackling the seven single-player and five multi-player modes with four loveable characters, unlocking the other 14 happy dudes from Nintendo's menagerie as you go along. Each of these has his or her own style. Baby Mario's swing isn't as boisterous as Donkey Kong's, for example.

The technique of this game develops when you combine character abilities with a choice of a full set of clubs. Set your sights using the overview map and grid, indicating terrain variation, and let rip. You have to time your swing according to a meter at the bottom of the screen, which indicates where to tap the A button and then mocks you when you duff it. Take some time at the training ground so as to preserve your console from angry ol' you.

Golf should be played in silence with lurking spectators clapping noiselessly. Not so in this game. Along with out and out cheers are remixes of old Mario tunes. Thankfully you can tune these out and get back to the game.

A bonus is Game Boy Color compatibility. If you have a Transfer Pak, you can take Mario and pals golfing wherever you go and input the info back onto the console upon your return home so you can finish the round.

As with the real thing, this game has its attention span issues. But with more than 145 holes to tackle it is certainly worth the money for longevity alone. Just leave the real clubs in the closet. ★★★

Aleks Krotoski

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Birdie

- Chock a block with a different kind of puzzle solving
- Hundreds of holes to play
- Taunt your pals at tee off

Bogey

- Just as infuriating as the real thing
- Difficult to avoid murdering the too cute characters

THIS GOLFING SIM IS INTRICATE ENOUGH TO BRING A MASTERS CHAMPION OUT IN A COLD SWEAT.



Or you could try...

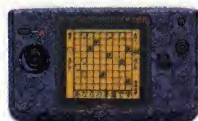
Beavis and Butthead Bungle In One
GT Interactive ★
An absolute travesty in mini golf through the tragic twosome's adolescent fantasies.

Hot Shots Golf
SCEE ★★★★★
Golf. Cute. Good. Could even be the prequel to *Mario Golf*.

SATURDAY MORNING 02:15

get some colour on your cheeks.

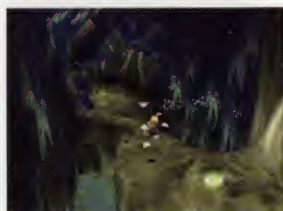
40 hours continuous playtime. 16bit colour power. 14 hot titles. 6 cool cases. 1 machine. Zero alternative.



NeoGeo £59.99 Games £24.99. Available at Electronics Boutique, Game, HMV, MVC, Dixons, Currys, @Jakarta, Beatties and all good independent retailers.



■ The move to 3D has done Rayman the world of good.



■ Rayman 2 is consistently inventive throughout.

Game info

- Publisher: **Ubisoft**
- Developer: **Ubisoft**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1**

RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE

FORGET '89, HERE COMES THE FRENCH REVOLUTION THAT MATTERS.



■ A living, breathing cartoon world; fantastic gameplay.

For once in his life, Ray Wilkins seems to have stumbled on the truth. The clarity of his Tango-fuelled utterance: "The lad's a Frenchman... anything could happen," has become painfully apparent in the latest videogame release from the land of fabled soap-dodgers, loose women and fast-growing cool creative clout.

Rayman 2 picks up where Rayman, produced by arch Frenchsters Ubisoft, left off. The original game boasted a character with no discernible arms or legs; his fists and feet seemingly suspended on invisible limbs. It was a very pretty, though pretty dull, 2D platform game. Given the origins of the series, and the astonishing development time of Rayman 2: The Great Escape, no-one was anticipating anything remarkable, beyond some atypical French weirdness. How wrong that was. If you thought Mario 64 and Banjo-Kazooie were the pinnacle of N64 platforming loveliness, it's time to have your expectations raised.

Here's the gist of the story, as related via a very lovely – and quintessentially

French – intro sequence. Rayman's world has been taken over by evil robot pirates. His people enslaved and his powers sapped, Rayman embarks on a quest to right wrongs and give Captain Razorbeard and his motley band an aggressive punch in the neck in the process.

The early stages in Rayman's quest are much akin to the original format: amazingly pretty forest levels, sunbeams streaming through a canopy of trees, gently trickling streams and some very bog-standard gameplay. However,

such is the genius behind the game that these preparatory stages are mere tasters for what is to come: a vast 3D platform quest, bristling with new ideas, wherein every level offers a radically different challenge.

The invention just keeps coming. Firstly, you'll be astonished by the graphics, the level of characterisation, the special effects and subtle touches. And then you'll be amazed by the depth of gameplay here. Never is a level (themselves almost annoyingly large) a straightforward shoot-the-baddies-with-your-magic-fists affair. At one point you may find yourself fleeing a giant spider by clambering hand-over-hand across its web. Another level may see you riding a lava flow on a big berry. Arcade's Rayman was required to waterski through a swamp. As the game progresses, the character's abilities are slowly introduced. Indeed, the latter stages of Rayman 2 will see you unleashing huge bolts of energy at giant robot pirates while simultaneously heli-hovering across a chasm; then swinging on mysteriously-suspended hoops via a tethered length of energy. Then you have the bonus levels, the hidden areas, the non-linear structure and the quirky cast of characters.

This is what videogames are all about: sparkling aesthetics coupled to gameplay which continually surprises and instils a sense of awe. If there's one flaw in the game, it's that dedicated gamers will probably work through it in a long weekend (finding all the secrets, however, takes much longer). Also, there's no multi-player mode (but that's not really what it's about). Go on: treat yourself to a bit of French. You know you deserve it. ★★★★★

Paul Rose

YOU'LL BE TRULY ASTONISHED BY THE GRAPHICS, CHARACTERISATION, EFFECTS AND SUBTLE TOUCHES.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Foie Gras

- Looks gorgeous
- Every level is different
- Loads of secrets

Rillettes

- Too easy for dedicated players
- Levels are sometimes too big
- Music is eminently forgettable

Or you could try...

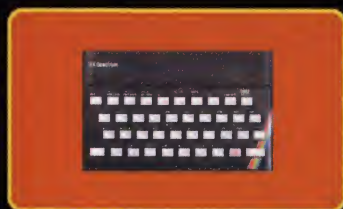
Super Mario 64
Nintendo ★★★★★
Simply, one of the best games ever.

Banjo-Kazooie
Nintendo ★★★★★
Sort of like Mario 64, but not as much fun.

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RETRO ZONE



* COMMODORE *

* NINTENDO *

* SINCLAIR *

* ATARI *

* SEGA *

* LOADS MORE! *

PLAYED
IT?

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online
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WHAT'S
ON THERE?

EVERYTHING
FROM
Sinclair ZX81s
TO
Dreamcast
games.

*Will it
cost me?*

It's free to
register, free
to list and free
to buy...
...all you need
is an email
address...
EASY!



■ (Above) Taste my fist, bitch.
■ (Right) A sucker punch from Damien Black, a fast track to brain damage.



Game info

- Publisher: Midway
- Developer: Midway
- Price: £40
- Release Date: out now
- Players: 1-2



READY 2 RUMBLE

THE FUNKY FIGHTER THAT'S LITERALLY GOBSMACKING. ARE YOU READY?

Time to pull your belt up to your armpits and don those gloves – because boxing is back in fashion. Fortunately it's not the real thing; that's far too bloody and there's always the danger of being drenched by smelly stray sweat. No, in *Ready 2 Rumble* the closest you'll get to a soaking are clammy palms as you clutch the neat little controller of your brand new Dreamcast.

The arcade-style action on offer – combined with some of the finest graphics ever seen on a console – makes for compelling gaming, but a large part of *Ready 2 Rumble's* appeal rests with the characters. From the sassy, minx-like Lulu Valentine to the jelly-bellied sumo Salua Tua, there's a boxer to please everyone. The international array of fighters arrive from as far afield as Japan – and even 19th century Britain in the case of the time-warped Big Willie Johnson. The array of personalities are as varied as the beasts on The Ark and each comes resplendent with unique moves. The boy from Bangkok, Rocket Samchay, is a Muay Thai champion and fights with lashings of oriental spice, while funky Afro Thunder hits like Afrika Bambaataa's beats.

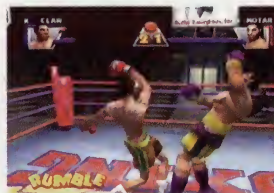
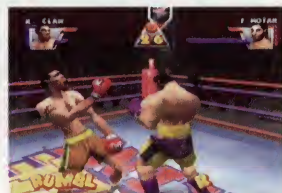
Ducking and a-diving, or bobbing and a-weaving is only the half of it in this game. Basic punches like the uppercut

and jab are shared by all – but the coolest moves in the game are activated by Rumble Mode.

Rumble Mode? Well, the blue power bar below the health bar indicates strength of punch available. Land a mighty bruise on your opponent and a letter will appear on your screen. When these spell out the word "rumble", your boxer is ready. A quick twitch on the triggers sets your character's gloves a-glowing, and a well-placed combo results in a white frenzy of fury raining down on your competitor. A flurry of these super strength hits will lay your opposition on the floor faster than a nun's jaw in a knocking shop, and if you're on the receiving end of a mighty rumble don't think that you'll be saved by the bell, either. The man in charge is the Magnus Magnusson of ring referees – he's started his count, so he'll finish.

If you fancy yourself as some sort of Don King figure, then you'll have to train up your own fledgling fighters to get to the top in the single-player Championship mode. What you get to do here is to choose a contender and start training them into the ear-nibbling monster that will consume all would-be threats on their way to claiming the heavyweight throne. Each training mission concentrates on sharpening up a different aspect of your boxer – and you have to pay to play. The most basic training involves getting your gloves dancing by copying buttons flashed on the screen in time to the music, *PaRappa* stylee. If you are rhythmically challenged and can't complete the simple exercises, you have to send your character off for a prize fight in some seedy location to win greenbacks to continue. To add to the backstreet dubiousness of it all, you can also bet on the outcome, which is nice. This serves to increase

■ Kemo Claw demonstrates the three steps to theatrically loosening the teeth of your hapless opponent.





HOWEVER BRUISED THE FACE (OR EGO), YOU'LL WANT TO DIVE BACK IN FOR MORE. LEGENDARY PARTY GAME STATUS IS ASSURED.

the experience level of your young pretender and should fill your purse with training tokens in the process

If this superb game does have a shortfall, it's that the single-player mode doesn't really lend itself to extensive play. Once you've mastered the controls and turned your first rookie rumbler into an international prize-winning pugilist, it's not much of a challenge to do the next. And the next. And the next. It's repetitive, but you do get to unlock hidden boxers as you progress, which is certainly worth persevering with. Once the skeletal, psychotic Kemo Claw or the wholly evil Damien Black is limbering up inside the ring, you'll be able to create some of the most bizarre bouts you – or anyone else – can imagine.

The real beauty of *Ready 2 Rumble* is revealed when you take on your mates. Whether you're a button basher or a finger ninja, this game is total pleasure. The range of moves on offer, combined with incredible speed of play will

get your adrenaline pumping and your hands itching to play; especially if you have a modern telly that will support the 60Hz option, which adds whizz for pedestrian PAL pushers. There's nothing quite as satisfying as dodging a hail of blows from your mate's guileless fighter before executing one KO punch with a valedictory grin. However bruised the face (or ego), you'll want to dive back in for more. Legendary party game status is assured.

You can't beat *Ready 2 Rumble* for instant gratification. From little details like the toothless chuckle of victorious characters to the dazed stagger of a beaten fighter, this game flexes its visual muscles like Ali at a Vegas weigh-in. Forget the competition provided by the puny faux-realism of *KO Boxing* and *Knockout Kings*, the true heavyweight champ of console pugilism has stepped forward to claim its title. One taste of its vicious right hook and you'll be splayed out on the canvas. ★★★★★ **Emily Newton Dunn**

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Rumble
 ■ Fantastic graphics
 ■ Great characters
 ■ Brilliant arcade action

Bungle
 ■ Little depth on one-player mode
 ■ Goddamn that Michael Buffer catchphrase and that dreadful looped music

■ We want a good clean fight and no punching below the belt... oh, who cares, do whatever the hell you want.

■ (Left) An unfortunate Rocket Samchay gets a stiff upper lip from the none-more-British Big Willie Johnson.

■ (Below) Those bruises in close-up.



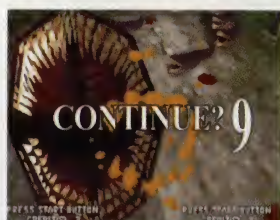
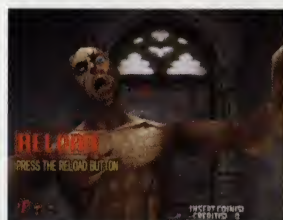
■ (Left) It's Michael Buffer and his licence to incessantly shout his catchphrase.

■ (Below) You da man! No, you really are da man!





- (Above) The Bros comeback tour wasn't going according to plan.
- (Below) Kill, be killed or watch people die. Now *that's* entertainment.



- (Above) Table tennis: the unheralded dangerous sport.
- (Below) Church has changed since I was a lad.



Game info

- Publisher: **Sega**
- Developer: **Sega**
- Price: **£55, including gun**
- Release date: **On sale now**
- Players: **1-2**

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

NOT THE LATEST IBIZA HITS COMPILATION. BUT THEN AGAIN...

Zombies aren't renowned for their social skills. Even a well mannered one will drop something it shouldn't – usually an arm or a leg. They're not the type to invite into your home, not even the humorous John Romero kind. Yet many of you will be doing just that when *House of the Dead 2* ports onto the Dreamcast.

The *House of the Dead* series originated as a coin-op shoot-'em-up that you could rely on to munch your money at an alarming rate. It represents zombie zapping in the extreme, and is the most fun you can have with a light gun.

Gorgeous graphics and bloodthirsty sound effects combine with well honed action to make a game that is as satisfying for the senses as it is exciting to play.

As you'd expect, the big daddy arcade version has been faithfully reproduced on the little white box. Blowing chunks out of the undead with a satisfying squelch is just as hard, although you have the option of four difficulty levels. Expect drive-by shootings and water sports as you wend your way through the many different routes of the city towards the end-of-level bosses. Each time you play you're likely to find a new path, either by saving the lives of hostages or shooting at keys. Indeed, the route you take to the boss can alter its setting – check out the third level,

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Ghoul
 ■ Arcade perfect...
 ■ ...but with bonus options
 ■ Two-player mode

Fool
 ■ Easy to complete

when the slithering dragon will either come at you through clear water or, terrifyingly, sand.

If you find one of the end of level monsters a particular problem, you can

step into Boss mode for some time trialled practice. There is also a Training mode, where you can perfect your skills. If you do well here, you unlock items in the Original mode.

Original mode is essentially a duplicate of the Arcade Mode, but the interactive scenery suddenly becomes home to goodies like limitless continues, extra lives and power ups. However, all these extras affect the gameplay: limitless continues mean that you're going to finish the six game levels fairly quickly and once you've done that, the game loses some of its appeal. Thankfully, there's a ranking section so you'll be able to show off to your mates.

Light gun fantastic, *House of the Dead 2* is still a step ahead of competitors *Time Crisis* and *Point Blank*, even if you'll more as likely complete it in a weekend. If you're still yearning for the real feel of arcade adrenaline (no doubt heightened by the fear of having to pump another pound in the slot), try sticking your telly on a ledge and shooting from the hip. ★★

Emily Newton Dunn

Or you could try...

Sega Bass Fishing
 Sega ★★ (import)
 More peripheralised Dreamcast madness.

Resident Evil: Codename Veronica
 Capcom
 Yet-to-be-released zombie action. Scary.



■ The best looking bald footballer ever!

Game info

- Publisher: **Infogrames**
- Developer: **Rage Software**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **November**
- Players: **1-4**
- Extras: **VM unit, 60Hz PAL**

UEFA STRIKER

DREAMCAST GETS THE BALL ROLLING.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

- | | |
|--|---|
| Top six
■ The best looking footie game on any system
■ Good player AI
■ Wealth of options and game modes | Relegation dogfight
■ Just too darn fast
■ Limited number of moves
■ The game does too much for you |
|--|---|

A football game in the first few months of the Dreamcast's life can only be a good thing. Not only is it almost guaranteed to sell well, but a top quality footie game should also help shift machines for Sega. With no *ISS* game for a while and Electronic Arts not committing to Dreamcast as yet, *UEFA Striker* has a good chance to establish itself on the Dreamcast. But only if it proves to be any good...

UEFA Striker takes a similar approach to football as the hugely successful FIFA series, that being that attack is the best form of defence. You soon find that games are usually end-to-end affairs; once you have the ball it's an easy route to goal and a shot. Tackling has been made far too difficult and you're more likely to gain possession from a

mistake made by your opponent than from a Stuart Pearce-style sliding tackle.

Play is also hampered by the speed of events – the action is way too fast. Even on the slowest setting the ball often goes out of view, making your next pass, shot or tackle a thing of luck. Playing on the fastest setting has you running your reflexes through the wringer of a giant game of football pinball and should only be attempted if you have the reactions of, say, a 128-bit processor.

Unfortunately, *UEFA Striker* also falls into the same trap as *FIFA* by doing too much for the player. It's quite possible to perform the most outrageous overhead kicks and volleys by tapping one button – you needn't even worry about your timing. But then again, *UEFA Striker* is unashamedly arcade in approach. If you want a game with depth and the demands of strategy then you'll have to wait for something with a little more flesh on its bones. Until then *UEFA Striker* should serve to keep Dreamcast footie fans satisfied, but only just. ★★★

Nick Jones

THIS SHOULD KEEP DREAMCAST FOOTIE FANS SATISFIED, BUT ONLY JUST.

■ While the option to change the camera distance is fine, it's impractical.



■ Freak or unique? Pen Pen's racers certainly have character.



PEN PEN

- Publisher: **Infogrames**
- Developer: **GE**
- Price: **£40**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2**

■ Have you seen the "new" version of *It's A Knockout* yet? While it may have been considered essential viewing in the sophistication-light '70s, the sight of grown men dressed in absurdly outsized caveman costumes, attempting to ferry buckets of coloured water across inflatable assault courses in prime time is wildly anachronistic.

Nevertheless, you just know that the contestants are enjoying themselves more than the viewer, which is good news for Infogrames as *Pen Pen* is essentially an *It's A Knockout* sim in which you control cartoon animals and manoeuvre them across bizarre assault courses.

Each of the courses in the game are divided up between three events: swimming, hopping around like an idiot and sliding along on your stomach (no, this isn't a joke). The characters are deliberately difficult to control, which results in the little buggers forever bumping into each other, jostling to fit through narrow gaps, ricocheting off huge pinball-style bumpers, or falling flat on their stupid backs as doors unexpectedly slam them in the face. It's a top lark in multi-player mode, and about as far removed a racing game can be from *Sega Rally 2* and yet still retain its racing game status.

As you'd expect, the graphics are bold and cartoon-like, though the characters (penguins, dogs, hippos etc) are, on closer inspection, almost monstrously deformed: imagine meeting Sonic after he had suffered a head-on collision with a bus.

However, when push comes to shove, *Pen Pen* may well prove too quirky and original to make it as a mainstream hit. That said, its uniqueness is its most appealing quality. While it's no cutting edge title, *Pen Pen* may just be unusual enough to attract a few die-hard devotees. ★★★

Paul Rose



■ Accurate racing around the streets of the principality.



RACING SIMULATION MONACO GRAND PRIX

■ Publisher: **Ubi Soft**
 ■ Developer: **Ubi Soft**
 ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **jump pack, arcade wheel**

■ Does speeding around a track spank your monkey? If so, get your gloved hands on a Dreamcast pronto. The platform offers three new racing titles at launch, which – if you're a car sim enthusiast – should fuel you with anticipation.

Monaco is a port of the follow-up to the acclaimed – yet bug-ridden – PC *Formula One Racing Simulation*. Somewhere along the line developer Ubi Soft fell out of favour with the F1 folks, so the company's latest title mirrors the tracks, cars and smells of the competition, without any reference to the official licence. You can, however, change names like M. Schmitke to, say, M. Schumacher, should you so desire.

Monaco offers you six modes to freewheel around the circuits in: Single Race, Championship, Career, Time Attack, Split Screen and '50s Retro. There are 11 racing teams and 22 tracks. You can be a pansy and play in Arcade mode, but the game is best as a sim.

Control-wise, expect frustration. Get a wheel. You'll only get to grips with 4-wheel independent suspension on a joystick if you're a bona fide racer, or a *Deals on Wheels* presenter.

The accuracy goes beyond horsepower. Your AI opponents have clearly been schooled in road rage and will stop at nothing to take you out of the game. Confounding matters further, the weather has mucho clout in your vehicle's performance. If there are clouds in the sky at the starting line, you'll have to pit sooner or later because there will be a downpour before you finish.

If you're into home-from-from-the-pub driving chaos, this isn't your game. Racing enthusiasts, however, will have a whale of a time. Gentlemen, start your engines. ★★ **Aleks Krotoski**



■ Water sports for all the family.



■ Don't slow down to admire the view.

Game info

■ Publisher: **Midway**
 ■ Developer: **Midway**
 ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**

HYDRO THUNDER

THE DREAMCAST GETS SPLASH-HAPPY.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Freshwater	Toilet water
■ Stunning visuals	■ No real new ideas
■ Loads of courses	■ Disappointing water effect
■ Great two-player larks	■ Where's the thunder?

What an excellent name for a game: cool-sounding, yet increasingly meaningless the more you think about it. You see, *Hydro Thunder* is a racing game, but a racing game with a kink. It has you driving (steering? piloting?) flashy speedboats around a series of waterlogged courses (hence the *Hydro*, presumably). Beyond that relatively obvious premise, *Hydro Thunder* makes little effort to impress you with new and innovative ideas. It is, nevertheless, as stonkingly lovely as biting into an apple to find half a worm inside – and then remembering that you're a blackbird.

The game has a traditional structure whereby you can unlock new boats and bonus courses by winning races, of which there are plenty to keep any grumbles at bay.

The first thing you'll notice upon playing *Hydro*

Thunder is how big the visuals seem; for once idle remarks about arcade quality graphics are justified. Typically styled to geographical locations – be they desert, Arctic or Far Eastern – the courses are packed with detail. From a blazing sun, helicopters circling overhead and searchlights blazing, to killer whales swimming ahead of your boat – everything is here. Frankly, if these are first generation Dreamcast visuals, the mind boggles at what's around the corner. Admittedly, the water effect isn't quite as convincing as the waves seen in the vintage N64 title *Wave Race*, but you'll be too overwhelmed to notice.

Of course, a game which survives on visuals alone is something of a Thai ladyboy – great until you get it home. Mercifully the gameplay in *Hydro Thunder* is spot on; the boats handle well and the tracks are varied and full of hidden shortcuts. Do you simply drop over the edge of the dam, or try and leap it to get that curiously floating turbo boost power-up? Do you take the safe way round, or head straight towards the waterfall in the hope it conceals a secret passage?

Hydro Thunder is exactly what the Dreamcast needs. It may not exactly rewrite the rulebook on aquatic racers, but it sets a benchmark in terms of presentation and gameplay for future next generation racing games. Lovely. ★★★

Paul Rose

A RACING GAME, BUT ONE WITH A KINK... YOU DRIVE FLASHY SPEEDBOATS.



■ "That bloody Goldilocks has stood us up."



Or you could try...

Sega Rally 2
 Sega ★★★
 Slightly disappointing arcade port of the serious racer.

Speed Devils
 Ubisoft ★★★★★
 Land-based, but similarly fantasy-orientated racer.



■ The random weather generator sure loves its fog.



SPEED DEVILS

GAMBLING ON YOUR OWN RACES IS THE DEVIL'S CALLING.

Ubi Soft has demonstrated canny tactics at Dreamcast's launch. Race game fans turned off by the oppressive realism of *Monaco Grand Prix* can simply glance along the shelf and find a copy of *Speed Devils*, an altogether more enjoyable proposition which will see you dodging UFO rays on one of the many chortlesome courses in a matter of minutes.

The emphasis of the game is on squeezing as much simple racing enjoyment as possible on to the disc. Options are basic, driving is a breeze and the car upgrade facilities are straightforward, giving you the welcome impression that progress achieved is due to sheer driving skills rather than the fine-tuning of your engine.

The game also introduces some novel Championship mode elements. First past the post is no longer the only goal; experience points are awarded for the fastest lap and highest speed attained in each race as well as for leading the field for the longest period and "busting radars" (breaking speed limits at various checkpoints). Money you earn can be gambled when other drivers periodically skulk up to your garage door and lay down various wagers on the forthcoming race. This has forced Ubi Soft to develop personalities for your rival competitors,

but while this was a golden opportunity for playful humour à la *Ready 2 Rumble*, they are as pathetically one-dimensional as David Essex in *Silver Dream Racer*. "I will share the spotlight with you today," mutters Penny G Parker, "but next time you will be in my shadow." Silly cow.

As long as you continue to unlock tracks as entertaining as Hollywood's film theme park, or Louisiana's tornado-stricken circuit, *Speed Devils* is fun. Sadly, the unique variety of point-scoring processes outlined above don't actually alter your race tactics in any way. Versus mode is disappointing – with only two cars on the track this is often a lonely experience and additional cat-and-mouse game modes are dogged by arbitrary scoring. For some reason the game enjoys setting up your split-screen races on night time courses, some of which are so cloaked in fog that you can't actually see any of the obstacles on the track.

Speed Devils is an entertaining racer that sports a number of potentially interesting new ideas but many of these haven't been fully thought through. Eventually the little giggles begin to ruin your enjoyment. Another thing to bear in mind is that while *Speed Devils* may be an antidote to *Monaco Grand Prix*, *Sega Rally 2* is better than the pair of them. ★★ ★

Sam Richards

Game info

- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Developer: Ubi Soft
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-2
- Extras: VM unit

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Bewitched

- Easy to get driving
- Intriguing multi-route courses
- Novel game modes

Bedevelled

- Simplistic and lacking in depth
- Untidy design
- Multi-player's a washout



■ Speed boost past those copters to "bust radars".

Also released

But only if you've got money to burn...

Words by | Paul Rose and Sam Richards



BUGGY HEAT

- Publisher: Sega
- Developer: CRI
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-2

■ Nothing to do with children's pushchairs, but the type of American off-road vehicles driven along beaches and tracts of desert by mulleted men wearing vests. These buggies can be tuned-up, ensuring they perform well on the assorted surfaces and fiendish U-turns the game throws at you. The unresponsive handling makes things tough at first, but there's a good game in there somewhere. ★★ ★



JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL

- Publisher: Virgin Interactive
- Developer: Awesome
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-2

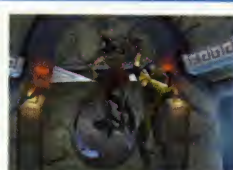
■ Not an essential purchase, but a game which will surprise you with sheer playability. PC owners will already be aware of the many hours it's possible to lose on the green baize (or the blue baize if you prefer pool) – much in the same way Jimmy used to lose whole weeks on supreme benders. To increase longevity darts, draughts and *Dropzone* are included – but these are all crap. ★★ ★



WWF ATTITUDE

- Publisher: Acclaim
- Developer: Acclaim
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-4

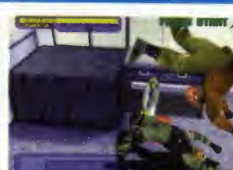
■ There's something hypnotic about watching sweaty overweight men in tight shorts grappling under the glare of spotlights. Well, there can be no other reason for the continued success of wrestling games and their appearance on the Dreamcast, can there? In this case the bouts lack atmosphere, but the number of selectable wrestlers and special moves available should satisfy WWF nerds. ★★



MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD

- Publisher: Midway
- Developer: Eurocom
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-2

■ More Henry Kelly's *Going For Gold* than a 24-carat stunner, *Mortal Kombat* has had its graphics cleaned up for Dreamcast but there's nothing here to attract new fans. The characters and arenas are all depressingly familiar, as is the jerky fighting style, the rubbish special combos and the laughable volleys of poorly-animated gore. Repackaging a sorely dated game as a classic won't wash with *Soul Calibur* so close to release. ★★



DYNAMITE COP

- Publisher: Sega
- Developer: Sega
- Price: £40
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1-2

■ A bizarre adventuring beat-'em-up, *Dynamite Cop* attempts to compensate for a lack of depth with some hilarious battle action. For half an hour you're holding your aching sides as the galley fridge is opened and you're pelted with rotten food. Then you realise it's too easy, the chick you're sent to rescue looks like *Blackadder's* Percy and you could be playing *Power Stone*. Or drinking your own wee. ★★



TOY COMMANDER

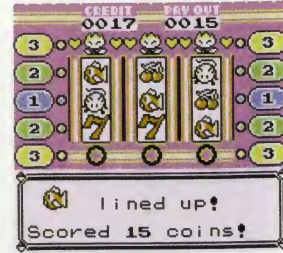
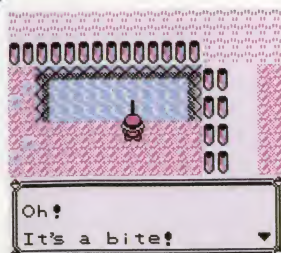
- Publisher: Sega
- Developer: No Cliché
- Price: £40
- Released: on sale now
- Players: 1-4

■ Remember when you used to play make-believe with your Tonka cars and Airfix planes? *Toy Commander* is an attempt to recreate that childhood magic. You drive planes and cars around a French home to complete an odd selection of missions, all of which are unengaging or stupidly difficult. There's no respite in the four-player deathmatch, in which you'll be lucky to find your foe. ★★

Other Systems

A Game Boy

■ **Pokémon** is much more than a glorified Tamagotchi. The inhabitants of Pokémon Island are all happily insane and keen to stop and chat throughout the course of your adventure.



Game info

■ Publisher: **Nintendo**
 ■ Developer: **Nintendo**
 ■ Players: **1-2 (with link cable)**
 ■ Price: **£25**
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**
 ■ Extras: **link cable**

POKÉMON

YOU REALLY SHOULD CATCH 'EM ALL.

Scenés of mania akin to those surrounding *The Phantom Menace* have ushered *Pokémon* to British shores. When the spin-off games, toys, books and TV shows arrive before the main event itself, you can't avoid feeling a creeping cynicism, as though marketing hype is dressing an otherwise naked emperor. Thankfully *Pokémon* justifies the fanfares.

If you're already furiously combing the Safari Zone in search of the rare Kangaskhan, you won't need convincing of the appeal of *Pokémon*. However, the attractions of the game aren't immediately obvious. In essence, *Pokémon* is an RPG-tinged adventure combined with a strong Tamagotchi element – not the most appealing summary, but few RPGs have ever been this universally endearing. Each monster you collect, particularly those you choose to train up and bless with comedy nicknames, develops a distinct personality.

Wander through the wilds and you're attacked by monsters which you can weaken and then capture. If you've ever completed a Panini sticker album you'll understand how incomplete your life will feel until the full complement of 150 Pokémon are in your possession. Just like *Football '86*, the

swapping and trading element is vital in order to catch 'em all, as a few monsters are unique to one of the two versions (red or blue). Finding a mate with the other version of the game and fighting their monsters – as well as singing the familiar "got got need" chorus – conjures up memories of many a lunch and break in the playground.

Every step of the way there are various Pokémon hunters, trainers and henchmen of the tamely evil Team Rocket, all of whom are thirsty to test the skills of their own monsters. Taking part in battle will increase your monsters' experience points and gradually they will learn new fighting skills and even evolve into more powerful forms.

Battle tactics gradually gain in complexity as the puzzle adventures become more bizarre and entertaining. It's hard to beat the warm feeling inside achieved by curing a seasick cruiser captain or allowing the workers of Silph Co to continue safely with their terrorist-threatened jobs; you aren't just a Pokémon collector but a Good Samaritan.

Despite its innovative combination of gaming forms and its charming nature, there are times when *Pokémon* becomes a wee bit repetitive. Searching for new monsters can be an immensely frustrating task, as you're constantly assaulted by species you've already captured and must endlessly repeat the same motions to defeat them. Have patience, though, and you will find yourself glowing with paternal pride as Bulbasaur evolves into the grown-up Ivysaur and you're seduced by one of the biggest game crazes in years. ★★★★★

Sam Richards

↑ Uppers & ↓ Downers ↓

Catch 'em
 ■ Even better than Panini football stickers
 ■ Amusing adventuring
 ■ A true original

Scratch 'em
 ■ Too repetitive
 ■ Obviously aimed at kids



■ Look! Bulbasaur is evolving! The sign of an attentive trainer.

A Neo Geo Pocket

SNK's handheld marvel scores six hits.

Words by Jonathan Davies



METAL SLUG 1ST MISSION

■ Developer: **SNK** ■ Publisher: **SNK** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1**

■ If all Neo Geo Pocket games are as good as *Metal Slug*, SNK's handheld could prove to be an expensive hobby. "Jump!" suggests the back of the box. "Fire! Evade!" And you're off, jumping, firing and evading through 16 multi-stage missions. Everything's spot on, from the animation of soldiers lurking in the undergrowth, to the hyper-responsive controls. And as well as jumping, firing and the rest of it, your little chap can drive a tank and fly a plane. Ideal. ★★★★★



PUZZLE BOBBLE

■ Developer: **Taito** ■ Publisher: **SNK** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1-2 (with link cable)**

■ Perfect pocket fare, *Puzzle Bobble* is a variation on the ubiquitous *Puyo Puyo* motif. But instead of dropping beans into place from above, you fire them from a cannon below. So, do you go for the easy shot into that pair of greens at the bottom of the heap, or try the one-in-a-million rebound lob off the wall and into the group at the top, to bring the whole screen-full crashing down? As addictive as hell. ★★★★★



POCKET TENNIS

■ Developer: **Yumekobo** ■ Publisher: **SNK** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1-2 (with link cable)**

■ It's hard to find fault with *Pocket Tennis*. It keeps writing the scores the wrong way round and the CPU is suspiciously easy to outwit, but otherwise it's a highly entertaining tennis game in the tradition of classics like *Super Tennis* on the SNES and, er, *Tennis* on the Game Boy. There are five courts to play on and you can pull off moves that would humble Pete Sampras. Connect two Neo Geo Pockets together and play a pal. ★★



NEO TURF MASTERS

■ Developer: **SNK** ■ Publisher: **SNK** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1 or 2 (with link cable)**

■ The packaging promises "54 holes of heat!", referring to the three golf courses that have been crammed into the tiny *Turf Masters* cart. Beautifully presented, from the verdant fairways to the cheering crowds, this is portable golf at its best. The shot system is perfect, even letting you skim the ball over water hazards, and you get a cast of six to choose from. There's even a link-up mode where you can boo to put your mate off. ★★★★★



KING OF FIGHTERS R-2

■ Developer: **SNK** ■ Publisher: **SNK** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1-2 (with link cable)**

■ Arguably the most miraculous Neo Geo Pocket game of all, *King of Fighters* is a dinky beat-'em-up that's more entertaining than most full-sized alternatives. It boasts 14 characters, devastating special moves, a nifty team mode and even a create-your-own-character facility – all depicted in cheery graphics. The Neo Geo's joystick is perfect for launching fireballs, and you can link machines for some good old fashioned fisticuffs. ★★★★★



NEO GEO CUP '98 PLUS

■ Developer: **SNK** ■ Publisher: **SNK** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Price: **£25** ■ Players: **1-2 (with link cable)**

■ The close-up view of the pitch you get in *Cup '98 Plus* means you have to rely on arrows to indicate off-screen team-mates. But otherwise this is a splendid pastime, with a story-driven championship mode and items like Octopus Gloves and Monkey Pants to improve your players' abilities. The animation is top-drawer, there are exciting penalty shoot-outs and England are billed as "strong in aerial battles". ★★★★★

A Coin-op



Believe it or not, the designers left some of their ideas out of this picture.

STAR WARS PINBALL 2000

IS THIS THE FUTURE OF THE STEEL BALL?

For those of you who loved the original *Star Wars* movie, *Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* may have proved a disappointment. You may have considered it a shallow, overproduced, vapid collection of tired set-pieces, driven more by marketing men than those with the true creative nous. Or perhaps not...

Fine, so it wasn't a great movie. But, luckily, while the above qualities seemed to have destroyed the film for many, they are ideal for use within a game licence.

Strangely enough, the first coin-op to utilise this licence to print money is a pinball table – but no ordinary pinball table. *Star Wars* is the second installment of Midway's *Pinball 2000* project, a modular system that reduces the time and cost of replacing pinball machines. It also utilises some cheeky technological features, mounting a monitor underneath the back glass to "project" hologram images onto the playfield, which is programmed to respond when these images are hit by the ball.

While the first game in the series – *Revenge From Mars* – performed well (although not as well as Sega's *South Park*), arcade operators have been waiting for the subsequent modular releases to judge whether *Pinball 2000* is worth the investment.

And on the strength of *Star Wars*, it probably is. The biggest improvement on the launch title is the graphics. While *Revenge From Mars* had a more comic book approach, to reflect the B-movie style of the game, there

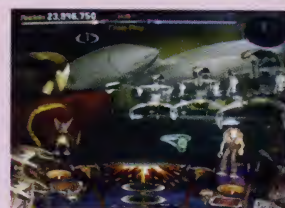
were always doubts as to whether *Pinball 2000* could deliver more polished visuals.

Star Wars answers that speculation with an emphatic "yes". Throughout the game, the 18 features – or mini games – are beautifully depicted, fully realising *Pinball 2000*'s ability to provide high quality visual effects. There are even stages in which the game utilises real movie footage, albeit digitised.

The mini-games vary in quality, however. Some scenes, such as the pod racing and the battles with Sith Lord Darth Maul, are effective uses of the licence and, more importantly, gripping to play. The four battles between the Jedi and Darth Maul are easily the best – you have to hit various targets around the playfield to carry out one of the Jedi's many attacks before time runs out. It's not exactly a new premise in terms of pinball features, but the holograms give the gameplay some real spice.

Other mini-games, such as *Jedi Musical Chairs*, are as disappointing as one would expect from such a woeful title. Then again, *Episode 1* is a juvenile movie and maybe Midway felt some less mature features were required in order to attract a younger demographic.

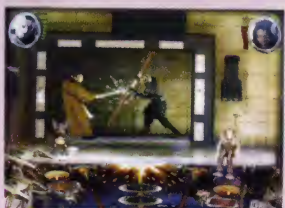
Pinball as a gaming genre has struggled over the last few years, but with games like *Star Wars* coming onto the market, at least it now has the map and compass to plot a chart back to higher ground. ★★ ★ **Cam Anderson**



The pod race is one of the better mini games on offer.

Game info

- Publisher: Midway
- Developer: Williams
- Release date: on sale now
- Players: 1



You'll have to hone your reflexes to Jedi levels to win.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

Force

- Polished visuals
- Fighting Darth Maul armed with a pinball
- It's *Star Wars*

Coarse

- Foolish mini games
- Gimmicky
- It's *Phantom Menace*

THEM CRAZY
PLAYSTATION
**MAD
PADS**



A Our Choice

Chameleon Controller

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£5**

■ Available from: **Wild Things**
on 02920 755774

■ The Chameleon controller looks and feels like a cheap, budget pad and is available in a rainbow of suitably gaudy colours, including electric red and commando; the one we had in for review came in what can only be called Del Boy gold. However, against all the odds, the Chameleon plays remarkably well.

The D-pad is a moving disc affair that enables you to make some nifty moves, while

the other buttons are equally responsive. Disappointingly, however, there are no analogue controls and the rapid fire Turbo option isn't great – if functional.

Yet, when you are playing a game – which is the reason that controllers exist, after all – this nobbly gold gamepad is quick and fun to use. And, at under a fiver, it's better value than some of the other pointless whizz-bang controllers reviewed here. The Chameleon is perfect for the nouveau-riche PlayStation owner – it'll go nicely with the swimming pool shaped like a dolphin and the mock tigerskin sofa. ★★★★★



Shock2 Infrared Controller

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£20**

■ Available from: **Guillemot**
on 0181 686 5600

■ A controller that enables you to play games without getting tangled up in those awkward wires? Hmmm. This sleek-looking pad seems like a good idea in theory; but in practice it's disappointing.

For a start, the unit requires four batteries that aren't included in the box – annoying if you open it on Christmas morning and all the shops are shut. That aside, the Shock2 works

fairly well, but is erratic: you can be mid-race in *Wipeout 3*, getting along swimmingly, but if you accidentally turn the pad away from the infrared receiver, or someone gets in the way, you lose contact for several fatal seconds. Reaction time is also slower than a standard controller that – ha! – uses old-fashioned leads to connect to your PlayStation.

Shock2's strong-point is the ability to play games from the other side of the room, which is a liberating experience and top fun. But that's only a gimmick; if you just want a pad that helps you play games better, look elsewhere. ★★



Evolution Motion Sensitive Control Pad

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£30**

■ Available from: **Leda Media Products**
on 0800 018 3061

■ This Evolution pad has the same technology as the mad motion-sensitive controller, but is significantly cheaper and recognisable as a pad. Blue and bulky with a whole gamut of buttons and switches, this is gaming option central.

One feature is motion-tilt mode, which is an inaccurate but enjoyable way to play

games – especially *Wipeout 3*. The rumble feature is particularly good, and gives a bone-crunching jolt when activated.

However, the motion sensitive aspect, while fun, can only be viewed as a gimmicky extra that won't improve your game performance. Thankfully, this doubles as a conventional pad too, so when the novelty of tilting it every-which-way has worn off, you can play properly using the D-pad disc or the analogue buttons.

A vast improvement on the other Evolution, but expensive compared with the superior official Sony controller. ★★★★★



ASCII Sphere 360°

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£30**

■ Available from: **Agetec**
on 01923 202097

■ A controller with balls. Well, one big ball to be precise, shoved atop an odd-looking silver controller. The Sphere is designed with flight sims and space combat games in mind, but unfortunately there's not too many of 'em out there for the PlayStation.

The package includes a training CD, where an annoying robot takes you through the rudimentary controls of the sphere, and

it's a good thing too. Using the sphere is complex, and the bugger is uncomfortable to hold. After 15 minutes fiddling, the Sphere starts to make more sense, and you're ready to try it with proper games.

But again, this soon proves a bit like hard work as whatever you're controlling on screen swings violently from left to right as you struggle to cope with the pad. Surely the point of a controller is that it makes your life easier, not more difficult and annoying, and the Sphere does nothing to improve your skills. An unusual but frustrating piece of gaming kit. ★★



Evolution Motion Sensitive Control System

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£50**
 ■ Available from: **Leda Media Products**
 on 0800 018 3061

■ "What the bloody hell's that?" you may exclaim when first setting eyes on the Evolution gizmo: it looks more like a piece of medical equipment used for testing blood-sugar levels than a game controller.

For your 50 smackers you get a reactor (a vibrating motion-sensor that straps onto either hand), plus a gripstick with

programmable keys and the normal PlayStation buttons. Playing games involves tilting your reactor hand at all angles to control the direction and speed, while using the gripstick to fire missiles – or whatever else you fancy.

However, the system is awkward, confusing and gets painful to use, and why should you bother with it when a PlayStation pad is much more intuitive and easy to play with anyway? Obviously a lot of time and effort has gone into this product, but you have to ask yourself why. Utterly pointless. ★



"G" grip

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£5**
 ■ Available from: **Club IT**
 on 0113 230 6060

■ This isn't a pad, but it passed the silly test with flying colours and so qualified for this round-up. The "G" grip is a moulded rubber accessory that slip snugly over the official PlayStation pad to give you "tactile feedback" and "enhanced grip", apparently. A brilliant idea because, let's face it, those tricky little controllers keep slipping out of your trembling hands and on to the floor,

now don't they? Well, maybe if you're a no-holds-barred Lara fan...

With your rubber on, you indeed get much better grip, and the pad now looks like it's wearing long sexy boots. Well, sort of. The "G" grip proves that an amusing add-on to an official analogue pad is mightily preferable to a whole raft of third-party controllers.

But five quid seems a lot of money for what you get and if you feel you really do need one of these, then you might want to think about getting out a bit more. For fetishists and gimps everywhere. ★★★

**MORE
PLAYSTATION
STUFF**



Sport card

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£8**
 ■ Available from: **Mad Catz**
 on 01992 707400

■ Some accessories are simply dull. And memory cards have to rank up there with the dullest of them all – small, grey, and as interesting as a weekend playing bridge in Barrow-in-Furness. But not any more.

Mad Catz has released a range of sports memory cards that are both great value and truly sensational to look at. There's a baseball one, a rugby one and –

surely the people's choice – a bloody great football one. The cards are distinctive so you won't get them mixed up – if *Arcade* had a penny for each time that happens! – and they work just as well as the official ones.

A slight criticism is that they stick out of the PlayStation a fair bit, and so make access to the controller port difficult. But, given that the alternative is playing hideously complex games of cards with old ladies in the north-west of England, the Mad Catz's Sports memory card looks like a surefire winner. ★★★★★



Equalizer Cheat Code Cartridge

■ For: **Nintendo 64** ■ Price: **£20**
 ■ Available from: **Datel Design** on 01785 810800

■ The idea of using cheats in games is regarded as sacrilegious by some gamers. The rest of the world sees it as a good way of breathing new life into a game that has lost some of its initial attraction through being too damn hard, or for having a laugh.

The Equalizer is the N64 version of the well-received PlayStation cheat cartridge. It's packed with ready-made cheats for 53 of the most popular games on the Nintendo machine – you know, titles like

GoldenEye, *Super Mario 64* and that there *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*.

Using the cartridge is easy, as it comes with a good manual and a clear options menu. Running cheats for *GoldenEye* proved a wee bit troublesome at first, but a quick call to the helpline sorted the problem out and everything then worked perfectly. New codes can be added to the cartridge, and there are numerous other options, including a V-RAM viewer which enables you to view graphics not normally seen in a game.

The Equalizer is certainly worth the money and is fun to use. Edward Woodward himself can now finish game levels with ease. ★★★★★

Film of the month



■ *The Limey*: it's no *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

Film info

■ Director: Steven Soderbergh
 ■ Starring: Terence Stamp, Peter Fonda, Luis Guzman, Leslie Ann Warren
 ■ UK release: 12 November

THE LIMEY

Get Carter just got better.

First *Out Of Sight*, now *The Limey*. The creative rebirth of *Sex, Lies and Videotape* helmer Steven Soderbergh – who so very nearly flung himself into a self-constructed vortex of obscurity with a string of emotionally frosty flops

– is one of modern Hollywood's more palatable success stories. Lord only knows what he'll do to Julia Roberts with his next project, *Erin Brokovich*, because this visceral, visually

inventive reworking of gritty Brit crime classic *Get Carter* boasts one of this year's most enigmatic turns from veteran Terence Stamp.

Admittedly, the plot is starkly simplistic. Released from prison after a nine year stretch for armed robbery, cockney yob Wilson (Stamp) immediately jets to LA to avenge the death of his daughter. Working on a string of

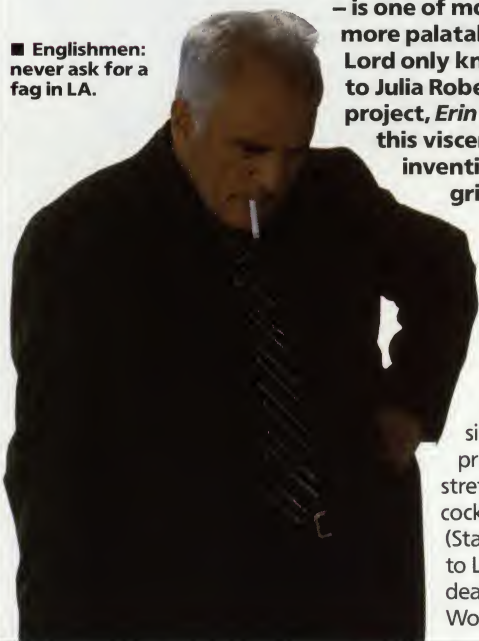
tip-offs, Wilson soon sets to work bludgeoning and gunning his way through goon after goon until he reaches Mr Big: reptilian money launderer Valentine (Fonda).

So far, so blah, but what cranks *The Limey* well above its one-man-army counterparts are its unique stylistics. Put quite simply, you've never seen a movie like it. Jutting fantasies, flashbacks and flashforwards in between shots of the present, the flickering structure at first appears to be an exercise in obscure editing. But as the movie follows Wilson's scattershot, GBH-flecked revenge tactics, so the jigsaw of images slowly start to click into place and burst with meaning and emotion. It's like watching a slo-motion firework.

Given the ambitious stylistics, *The Limey* could have been an inaccessible mess, but Soderbergh's control over his images is masterful. He also has, in his favour, two immensely charismatic leads.

Although Stamp and Fonda's characters rarely clash until the confrontational climax, there's an undeniable mist of chemistry as Stamp's intense, dignified acting style works against Fonda's notorious horizontal charms. Lash in some inspired Englishman In Los Angeles culture-clash gags, some crackling set-pieces and a funky retro soundtrack and you end up with extraordinary entertainment. Simple, isn't it? ★★★★★

■ Englishmen: never ask for a fag in LA.



BOWFINGER

■ Director: Frank Oz
 ■ Starring: Steve Martin, Eddie Murphy, Heather Graham, Terence Stamp
 ■ UK Release: 22 October

Judging by his recent unfunnies, the '90s Steve Martin is less wild and crazy guy, more mild and lazy drag, but the bright and inventive *Bowfinger* marks a return to form.

Martin's self-penned script throws up a doozy of a situation loaded with lung-spluttering potential. Slipping into his celebrity asshole persona, Steve plays schlock mogul Bobbie Bowfinger, who spots box-office gold in ludicrous alien invasion script *Chubby Rain*. Lumbered with a budget of \$2,180, Bowfinger's plan is to rope the world's biggest action star Kitt Ramsey (a self-effacing Eddie Murphy) into appearing in his movie without him even knowing it. Assembling a cast of no-hope stooges, Bowfinger takes to the streets and, candid camera in hand, shoots his movie while Ramsey gets increasingly paranoid.

Despite Frank Oz's uneven direction leaving a feeling of half-spent expectation, this sly, unashamedly stupid Hollysatire still delivers its fair share of rib-splitters, not to mention the best dog-in-high-heels joke you're likely to see this century. Dumb but fun. ★★

TAXI

■ Director: Gerard Pirés
 ■ Starring: Samy Nacéri, Frederic Diefenthal, Marion Cotillard
 ■ UK Release: 26 November

Opening with a moped fizzing around the streets of Marseille to the spangled strum of Dick Dale's "Misirlou" (AKA The Theme From *Pulp Fiction*), you'd be forgiven for thinking this Luc Besson-produced thriller will deliver its action with an octane edge. But as the movie slouches heavier on seen-it-done-it car chases and buddy-buddy boredom, it soon becomes clear that *Taxi* barely has an original spark under its bonnet.

Legend has it that Besson



■ **Bowfinger:** a return to form for Steve Martin.

knocked out the script for his boyracer-buster in under a week, and it shows. Taking the paper thin premise of a rookie cabbie inadvertently teaming up with an uptight, accident-prone copper to bust a German bankrobbing ring, Besson's screenplay is cynical, idiot-friendly stuff: give 'em cars, give 'em stunts, make 'em laugh, send 'em home. True, newcomer Nacari is dipped in Gallic charm, but even he struggles with the juvenile dumbcrack dialogue that interrupts the none-too-special chases. As for the German bankrobbers, they're your archetypal, glassy-eyed Aryan arsewits with less depth than a children's paddling pool. No edge, no tension, non merci. ★★

THE SIXTH SENSE

■ Director: **M. Night Shyamalan**
 ■ Starring: **Bruce Willis, Olivia Williams, Haley Joel Osment**
 ■ UK Release: **5 November**

■ Child psychiatrist Malcolm Crowe appears to be in a state of career and marital bliss. But things soon go scare-shaped when a

gibbering ex-client enters his house, crouches on the bathroom floor and shoots Crowe in the gut. Shift on a couple of months and the recovered quack is now attempting to cure jittery kiddie Cole Sear. However, when the child whispers his secret – "I see dead people. They want me to do things for them" – the weird shit hitteth the fan.

Strange as it sounds, *The Sixth Sense* has gone on to match *Titanic* for blockading the number one spot at the US box-office, and it's easy to see why. Blindsided by a humdinger of a twist, shell-shocked punters have queued to watch the movie all over again. Of course, it'd be churlish to give the game away, but it proves just how irresistible the sting is in an otherwise talky affair.

Granted, Shyamalan's grasp of spooky cinematics seem worryingly reliant on a score that sounds like an orchestra falling down the stairs, yet the performances (especially child actor Osment) lift the material into an unsettling atmosphere of calm creepiness. Intriguing stuff well worthy of catching at the cinema. ★★ ★

■ **The Sixth Sense:** unsettling.



■ **Deep Blue Sea:** "Hey, is that a Chunky Kit-Kat?"

DEEP BLUE SEA

■ Director: **Renny Harlin**
 ■ Starring: **Samuel L. Jackson, Thomas Jane, LL Cool J**
 ■ UK Release: **22 October**

■ High-concept action movie dunce hats on? Then let's go. On a misguided weekend off, tycoon Russell Franklin (a Joe-90 Jackson)

is choppered over to ocean research station Aquatica to see where all his cash into curing Alzheimer's Disease is going. Dr McAlester supplies the unlikely answer in the shape of four gene-enhanced sharks, the idea being that their superbrains can supply an all-cure fluid. Inevitably, a storm hits the station, flooding the corridors, freeing the sharks and allowing the audience to tick off the fish-fodder cast one by one.

Jurassic Shark? A View To A Gill? Jaws Times Four? Those with their movie maths calculators will easily spot Harlin's cribbing crimes (*Jaws*, *Aliens*, *Titanic*, *The Abyss*), yet the Finnish helmer directs with such straight-faced enthusiasm, shows such love for his bonzer monsters and such utter disrespect for his expendable cast that you'll soon find yourself cheering for the fish.

See it stone cold sober, and the Spitfire pace of the action makes for preposterously unpretentious fun. Down a pint of gin on an empty stomach beforehand, though, and you'll probably shit yourself. ★★ ★

Videos to rent



■ **8mm:** American porno.

THE FACULTY

■ **Buena Vista**
 ■ Hollywood is chucking out teen ensemble films at an alarming rate in a concerted attempt to establish a new Bratpack. *The Faculty* boasts a charming cast (Josh Harnett, Elijah Wood, Jordana Brewster), who play the staple geek, goth, jock, naive new girl... you get the idea. The plot comes straight from *The Demon Headmaster* ie aliens take over the bodies of the teachers and set about recruiting pupils. Our band of unlikely heroes are the only ones to save the day, discovering that the seemingly invincible aliens have one weakness – a fatal reaction to the drugs peddled by Zeke, the school rogue. *The Faculty* is a bit like *Degrassi Junior High* if directed by David Cronenberg. But not quite as good. ★★

BMM

■ **Columbia Tristar**
 ■ In the mixed-up world that is pornography, the snuff movie represents the end of the line. Instead of faking pain and exploitation, legend has it these flicks show straight-up murder. Private eye Tom Welles (Nick Cage) is drawn into the murky world of porn when a dead industrialist's wife finds a dodgy 8mm film in his safe. Cue the luckiest ever find of a missing persons file, a chance encounter with porn's best-connected shop boy and plot tensions as obvious as those of Sweden's most revered export.

If you want to see a quality film on this subject check out *The Lost Son* – it contains characters. ★★

LITTLE VOICE

■ **Buena Vista**
 ■ What is it about shy people that film-makers find so hard to resist? Could it be that stories like *Little Voice* – timid girl hides colossal talent – tap into the belief that everyone's a star? Whatever the reason, *Little Voice* is seductive fare and the rock-solid cast – Michael Caine, Brenda Blethyn, Ewan McGregor and Jane Horrocks – show why they command such respect. Washed-up talent scout Ray Say (Caine) hears his latest conquest's daughter singing her heart out. Before you can say gravy train a gig is arranged and only LV's stage fright stands between all concerned and fame. Underpinning the action are some great jokes and sharply observed relationships. While you'll finish the film wishing you could sing, *Little Voice* is life-affirming stuff. ★★ ★

DVD The biggest new releases.



■ **Pulp Fiction:** you know what happens next

PULP FICTION

■ **Warner Bros**
 ■ At last Tarantino's masterpiece arrives on DVD, allowing you instant access to the key scenes so you can learn the dialogue off by heart – it's what most other Hollywood directors have been doing for the last five years anyway.
 ■ **Extras:** Instant

scene access, documentaries.
 ★★ ★ ★

GHOSTBUSTERS

■ **Columbia Tristar**
 ■ There is indeed something strange in the neighbourhood. Namely the release of this "classic" starring Dan Ackroyd and Bill Murray among a cast of '80s stalwarts

attempting to cleanse New York of supernatural menace through the simple power of matey wisecracks. Just try to avoid the sequel, released simultaneously.
 ■ **Extras:** Commentaries, behind the scenes documentary, SFX feature, story boards.
 ★★ ★

Videos to buy

SCOOPY DOO ON ZOMBIE ISLAND

■ **Warner Bros**
 ■ Yoiks! You remember *Scooby Doo* fondly – strictly because the incessant repetition appeased infant desires for comfort and safety. Scoob and Shaggy get lost, Scoob sees ghost, they run gawkiily along endless corridor, they fall over, net accidentally falls on ghost, it turns out to be the shady museum curator after all. Packaged for a nostalgia-hungry student audience, *Scooby Doo On Zombie Island* proves this formula is no fun when extended over 70 minutes.
 Little has changed in Scooby's world. Velma's

■ **Scooby Doo:** still the same old same old.



on the Net and Daphne's pursuing a promising PR career, but Shaggy's the same old stoner. Naturally, the crew can't resist investigating a haunted bayou with the help of

local characters, all of which are candidates for the masked villain behind it all.

To think, they might have got away with it if it wasn't for those pesky reviewers. ★

Book of the Month

■ All the music news that's fit to print.



MELODY MAKER HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC

Seven decades of music trivia.

Melody Maker magazine has been on the newstands since 1926, when it started covering great gramophone hits of the day. Since then it has delivered the latest news on whatever musical movement might be fashionable at the time. This book is essentially a compilation of clippings from the magazine, covering everything from the big bands, jazz and blues, on into rock and roll and contemporary sounds.

Interestingly, the '20s and the jazz age are only covered sparingly. There are a few nice stories, such as how you could have tuned into the first transatlantic live performance via telephone – Dial a Gig? Like it – but these eras are treated lightly, not because the information isn't there – Johnson had access to the entire archive – but because not many people are

interested in the minutiae of the pre-war music scene. After 70 pages you reach Elvis, so this isn't really a comprehensive history of 20th century pop, more a look at post-war music. Indeed, once you get into the last 30 years, the detail comes on a month-by-month basis. Anyone remember Cactus World News? Thought not.

Johnson isn't afraid to highlight the bias of the writers in the magazine, be it the sexism of the early editors or the wild pop-culture theories of recent writers. Look out for an interesting take on how the death of Kurt Cobain sparked the Britpop phenomenon, for example.

As a tome of trivia *Melody Maker History of Popular Music* rates second to none, but it also works as a documented history of the rise and rise of pop music. Read, digest, and spank your mates in a pop quiz any day of the week – praise indeed. ★★★★★

Dan Mayers

Book Info

■ Author: **Nick Johnstone**
■ Publisher: **Bloomsbury**
■ Price: **£25**
■ ISBN: **0-7475-4190-6**

PERSONAL INJURIES

■ Author: **Scott Turow**
■ Publisher: **Michael Joseph**
■ Price: **£16.99**
■ ISBN: **0-71814-409-0**



■ You might expect the author of *Presumed Innocent* to pen another brutal twist-in-the-plot type novel. You'd be

right. Lawyer Robbie Feaver gets nicked for corruption and is subsequently coerced by the FBI into helping indict other corrupt officials in Kindle County, while plain Jane FBI agent Evon Millar oversees the undercover operation. Cue protracted plotlines that unmask level after level of legal and emotional deceit.

As ever, Turow masterfully paces the plot, although an annoyance is that the narrator stands outside the central Feaver/Millar relationship, and wasn't around for key plot events. Turow acknowledges this flaw in having his narrator say: "I've imagined it in the same detail as so much else I've described but never witnessed". But in a book about the nature of lies and deceit, who's to say this guy's telling the truth? ★★

GHOST FORCE

■ Author: **Ken Connor**
■ Publisher: **Orion**
■ Price: **£6.99**
■ ISBN: **0-75282-697-2**



■ Subtitled *The Secret History of The SAS*, *Ghost Force* is the result of a stubborn one-man crusade to tell the

truth about Britain's "secret" armed forces wing. Having served 23 years at senior levels within the SAS, no-one is more qualified than Ken Connor to write its history. But being an insider limits his sense of perspective. Much of Connor's commentary on the SAS storming of the Iranian Embassy, or the Falklands War is fascinating, but an equal amount is boring.

Connor may criticise hyped, fictionalised accounts of SAS missions by people like Andy McNab or Chris Ryan, but he can't help lapsing into similarly clumsy, dramatic prose himself.

Towards the end, it becomes of little interest which political arse the SAS kissed the Gulf War: you just wish their operations had remained classified so you didn't have to read another tedious book about them. ★★

STOP THE RIDE I WANT TO GET OFF

■ Author: **Dave Courtney**
■ Publisher: **Virgin**
■ Price: **£16.99**
■ ISBN: **1-85227-890-0**



■ As he sees it, Courtney's a real gangster – which is why he's still alive and out of prison, despite

having had his nose bitten off, shooting his way out of a Dutch bordello with £500,000 in his coat pockets and openly admitting to murdering a hitman.

Fair play. However, Dr Dave also believes that you are what you are, and nothing will change that. Oh, and that keeping Reggie Kray inside serves no purpose, as he wouldn't harm a fly. Add to this the sort of bouncer-think that decrees that if people laugh at your gags, you're funny – as opposed to bloody scary – and *Stop The Ride* takes on sinister overtones.

This is a story of a man who opted into a hardman lifestyle to "be someone", suggesting he'd have been a no-one otherwise. In a culture where face, front and reputation are all, Courtney has done a good job. But in terms of a look into a life, this smacks of not being – how you say? – real. ★★

MANNERS

■ Author: **Robert Newman**
■ Publisher: **Hamish Hamilton**
■ Price: **£9.99**
■ ISBN **0-241-13980-5**



■ *History Today*, arguably the only original comic moment generated by Rob Newman and David

Baddiel, is history. Nowadays, the former thorny crowned princes of student humour have graduated to greater things. Baddiel, himself a published novelist, has just sold a therapy-based sitcom for shedloads – while Newman has followed up his painfully lightweight debut, *Dependence Day*, with a second stab at proper grown-up writing. And, in what is a pleasant surprise, he has produced an excellent novel.

The prose has been painstakingly crafted and, to Newman's credit, the whole thing has been thoroughly researched. *Manners*, named after the protagonist's surname, relates the compellingly tortuous downward spiral experienced by a police officer waiting to be tried for manslaughter. If Newman continues improving this fast, he may even get rid of the "comedian as novelist" tag completely. Well done. ★★★★★

Comic of the Month



THE AVENGERS

Comic Info

■ Writer: **Kurt Busiek**
■ Artists: **George Perez**
■ Publisher: **Marvel Comics**

■ As a reminder of why most people got into comics in the first place – a combination of super-powered scraps, buff bodies and '70s soap opera-style conundrums – this revamped series is hard to beat.

These Avengers have nothing to do with Steed and Mrs Peel. They're Marvel's self-styled "Earth's

Mightiest Heroes", including characters like Captain America, Thor, Iron Man and The Wasp. Current creep is indestructible robot loon Ultron, who's busy wiping out entire countries in his bid to bring the Avengers to their knees. The story suffers from typical Avenger flaws (over-written dialogue and



over rendered art) but has an undeniably epic sweep – it's like a Tom Clancy novel for

superheroes, and ideal for anyone new to comics. ★★ **Matt Bielby**

Music

■ Foo Fighters: Spot the fawn.



FOO FIGHTERS

There Is Nothing Left To Lose

■ Label: **RCA**



■ Dave Grohl began the decade with a hand in one of the greatest rock records ever

made and although *There Is Nothing Left To Lose* doesn't quite scale those heights, it surfs out the '90s with considerable panache. It's easily the best Foo Fighters record to date, combining tight-ass fuzz guitar lines with an epic rock feel owing something to the finest work of both Jane's Addiction and Smashing Pumpkins. The tunes stack up like syrupy pancakes on a Louisiana breakfast plate, a hit-and-run trick also practised by Supergrass.

Unlike most of the abysmal rock music currently being shipped from the States, the Foo Fighters deal not in angst but in righteous anger ("Stacked Actors" tears into showbiz fakes, Grohl screaming "line up the bastards, all I want is the truth"). This is balanced with a shot of breezy hedonism. All told, this is a right rollicking rock record. ★★★★★

FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS

Mimosa

■ Label: **Chrysalis**



■ The Fun Lovin' Criminals are undoubtedly Renaissance men. In their native New York they

own a garbage collection company. In London, they're setting up an Italian restaurant. Between rucking with Underworld and rolling the best joints in Christendom, they can barely have time to write any music. Hence this collection of covers and arrangements, largely culled from previous B-sides. The likes of "Wonderful World" and Sinatra's "Summer Wind" are dealt with in a predictable rock-lite fashion. Ozzy's "Crazy Train" remains just the right side of pastiche and more obscure tracks by the likes of The Manhattans are pleasant enough. Versions of "Scooby Snacks" and "I Can't Get With That" thankfully play down FLC's more tiresome tendencies, revealing them as musicians of some quality. Time to dislodge tongues from cheeks and inject some soul into things. ★★

JAMES

Millionaires

■ Label: **Mercury**



■ "I know what I'm here for," bellows Tim Booth in his painfully over-enunciated

manner. Which must be nice, because we were convinced that James had no purpose in music any more. *Millionaires* finally sees them disappear completely into the black hole of pop that is your Dad's record collection.

Most James songs these days are anodyne affairs substituting passion for orchestrated bluster, weighed down by Booth's self-important vocals. Listen carefully and the band appear to be craftily rewriting their back catalogue: "Crash" is mighty similar to "Come Home" and "Afro Lover" slowly strangles the life from "How Was It For You?" The supposed irony of the album's title is lost as this festival of blandness is highly likely to make James millionaires via the wallets of comfy-shoed England. Musically, though, James are virtually bankrupt. ★★

IAN BROWN

Golden Greats

■ Label: **Polydor**

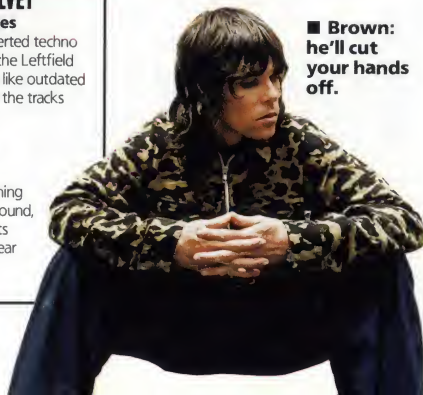


■ Straight outta jail, bobbing and weaving like a true Manc messiah,

dispensing street wisdom and musical truths to the masses, it's the one and only King Monkey. Except it's not. It's a rough-looking bloke with a flat and uninspiring voice making mediocre indie-dance music. The fact the he once fronted the Stone Roses now entirely irrelevant, *Golden Greats* doesn't even boast the naive charm of previous wayward effort *Unfinished Monkey Business*.

There's potential in *Golden Greats*. Most tracks begin with a pile-up of inventive samples and end in a tumble of dirty analogue bleeps. The problem lies with the uniformly dull songwriting and interminable muso guitar soloing. Someone more talented should steal the producers and create a masterpiece. ★★

■ Brown: he'll cut your hands off.



Album of the Month



■ Burgess was quick to attune to LA living.

THE CHARLATANS

The only ones we know.



Album Info

■ The Charlatans
■ *Us And Us Only*
■ Label: **Universal/MCA**

For The Charlatans, dogged by bad luck, disasters, deaths and the odd period of critical denunciation throughout their career, every album feels like a comeback. "Once more, this will be forever," emphasises Tim Burgess on their recent hit and opening track. Fighting to prove themselves with each release, The Charlatans ooze

determination and redemptive soul – a quality which lifts them above their average peers.

Us And Us Only drinks deep from a well of classic rock, namely electric Dylan and early '70s Stones. Still, the towering basslines always lock into a contemporary groove, allowing the group to get away with creeping Americanisms and even a harmonica break. Much of the album finds Tim in star-crossed mood, probably due to both his marriage and LA relocation – "I Don't Care Where You Live" is as carefree and romantic a tune as you could wish to hear.

"Good Witch/Bad Witch" proves they can do spooky, "A House Is Not A Home" is their requiem for a lonely soul and heading back to "Forever", Tim is enthusiastically lambasting the doubters ("I wonder what you people do with your lives!"). So, *Us And Us Only* is an effortlessly versatile selection, but all songs are drenched in The Charlatans' positive sweat. There may have been no real odds to contend with this time, but The Charlatans have filled another fine album with their patented brand of survival soul. ★★★★★

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: CORBIS

Millennium jukebox

Musical ear-syringing for the waxy build-up of the Arcade office.

BECK

Sexx Laws

■ The impish impresario again contrives to get our pale booties shaking like startled chickens. He's the new Prince, y'know.

WU-TANG CLAN

Enter The 36 Chambers

■ Taste *The Pain* reminded us that before they became a clothing company, the Wu-Tang were nuthin ta fuck wit.

MOUSE ON MARS

Niun Niggung

■ Sounded like our stereo was chewing up a Daft Punk remix of the Beach Boys. Incomprehensibly good stuff.

IBIZA TRANCE HITS 4

■ All the tracks we hated during the summer now make us nostalgic for sun and warmth. Alice DeeJay, Get Get Down, that Bob Marley one, even bloody "Blue Ba Da Be".

GREEN VELVET

The Nineties

■ Ace perverted techno that makes the Leftfield album seem like outdated waffle. Even the tracks from 1993.

MOGWAI

EP

■ A frightening tornado of sound, leaving hearts broken and ear drums split.

■ Welcome to the future: swinging a bat around in the sitting room, your vision obscured by this baby.



VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD

Slug one out the park from your bedroom.

Not so long ago, virtual reality was going to be the cornerstone of a whole new world: no longer would you be damned to working behind a bread counter in Surbiton, they said, you'd just climb into your VR suits and boom! Texan supermodel aboard the good ship Mine with as many cocktails as you could keep down.

Only it didn't quite work out like that, did it? All of a sudden, VR kind of became yesterday's news, and it was back to the crusty cobs. But this, apparently, is what has been happening in the meantime: VR has found its true home



in, er, the technological hotbed that is baseball games.

This \$30 (£18) games system from Virtual Reality World uses a VR visor to put you right there at the plate. The virtual pitcher lobs the ball, motion detection sensors measure the swing of the attached bat and some clever computer trickery figures out if you've hit the ball or not and adjusts the display accordingly. Fantastic. The unit has even been designed so it doesn't cover your mouth, and so you can chew on you baccy while playing or dispute umpire calls.

And if baseball isn't your bag, don't worry, as there are similarly-priced boxing, golf, ninja fighting and fishing versions. But, sadly, you can only get these beauties in the States. ★★ ★

Game info

- Cost: \$30 (£18)
- Available from: Manley Toys on 00 1 (212) 633 0175
- Release date: on sale now

Gremlin mountain board info

- Cost: £199
- Available from: Maxtrack on 01531 635564
- Release date: on sale now



■ "... and the straps keep you safe from harm, sir."

GREMLIN MOUNTAIN BOARD

Like a rolling stone. Sort of.

Be clear on this: Arcade accepts no responsibility should you go out and buy one of these. If you choose to strap yourself to a bloody great skateboard and go tear-arsing down a mountainside, that's your decision, so no calling during work hours to say: "Hello, I chose to strap myself to a bloody great skateboard and go tear-arsing down a mountainside, and now I'm in multiple traction and may never walk again and it's all your fault." You'll get short shrift. Capische?

Anyway, this is the Gremlin, the beginners' model in Maxtrack's range of five-foot long skateboards with nine-inch wheels and pneumatic tyres. The idea is that you climb on these bad boys at the top a hillside and somehow remain upright until you reach the bottom and roll to a gentle halt – a bit like snowboarding without the snow.

Maxtrack alleges that the MBS Twinshock channel truck system means these mobile planks can cope with grass, dirt, rock or any other terrain you care to hurtle over, but that's something Arcade has opted to take on trust. If your deathwish extends beyond the beginners level, the range goes right up to the Supercharger, a £550 board with Quadshock adjustable suspension. And no, that one wasn't off-road tested either.

★★★★★ (pose points) ★ (sanity score)

GLCD4 info

- Cost: £199
- Available from: Goodmans on 01705 391000
- Release date: on sale now



■ More tricks than Sunset Boulevard.

GLCD4

Jack of all trades, master of none.

There was that annoying kid in every school, wasn't there? The one who could be captain of the sports team, come top in every subject and snag attractive members of the opposite sex with consummate ease.

People who considered themselves lucky to do one thing well would view him or her with a mixture of grudging

admiration and barely-concealed levels of loathing.

Well, this Goodmans all-in-one TV, CD player and radio is, sadly, one of us. It seems ideal: chuck all those staples into one curvy little black box, and flog it for less than two ton.

The problem is the sound from the CD player is tinnier than a canning factory, and as for the telly, well, if Spider from

Coronation Street really is purple and Manchester has been struck by blizzards recently, then the GLCD4 is a cracker.

Still, you have to hand it to Goodmans for cramming everything in at such a low price. The package also manages to look all right, and the radio works fine. Worth considering if you're really strapped for cash and you're desperate. ★

WRIST ACTION

Digital watches are back from fashion hell, only today's hi-style models are a far cry from the black plastic monstrosities of the '80s. Russell Deeks, oh he of *T3* magazine, reckons he knows what time it is.

A Our choice

DIGIT XL

- Available from: **Storm on 0207 874 6900**
- Price: **£65**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ No, there's nowt clever here. You get a backlight, but that's about as hi-tech as the Digit XL gets, having none of the stopwatch, alarm, phone book-type gubbins some of today's other digital watches can offer. But will you just take a look at the thing? Not unlike Pulsar's famous Spoon watch (you know, those ones in the "knife, fork and Spoon adverts" that were plastered over every magazine in the country for the first half of this year), but even-better looking: the Digit XL is quite simply the coolest timepiece you – or your would-be lover – will ever have clapped eyes on. ★★★★★

STORM DIGITHON

- Available from: **Storm on 0207 874 6900**
- Price: **£95**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ This is probably the most traditional-looking of the watches here, thanks to the fact that the face is dominated by a big pair of hands. But look a little more closely and you'll see that there are also digital read-outs for the date and time. You set the time on the digital bit independently of that on the analogue display, so it's ideal if you do a lot of international travel – or would like people to think you do. On the downside, the styling isn't necessarily to everyone's taste: shiny face good, two bars bad. ★★★

FUSION RMZ019L9

- Available from: **Seiko on 01628 770988**
- Price: **£50**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ Another extremely stylish offering from Seiko, this one coming from its Fusion stable. Not a million miles from the Lorus, albeit decidedly rounder, the Fusion also sports a backlight, stopwatch and alarm, and is water-resistant to 50 metres. And again, it's all nice and shiny. It's a little more svelte than the Lorus, which means it's slightly more suitable for those who the good Lord hasn't blessed with wrists like tree trunks. ★★★

LORUS RBZ001L7

- Available from: **Seiko on 01628 770988**
- Price: **£50**
- On sale date: **available now**

■ Speaking of Spoon, here's another offering from the same stable (Seiko is the parent company to Spoon, Lorus and Fusion, and makes more than 50 digital watches between the three brands). Some of the Lorus offerings are a bit suspect, but this is a goodie: its irregular hexagonal case makes it stand out from the crowd, and you may prefer its shiny silver to the brushed aluminium of the Storm. Features-wise, as well as a backlight you get a stopwatch and alarm, which is handy. It's water-resistant to 100 metres, too. ★★★

FUTURIST

- Available from: **Casio on 0181 450 9131**
- Price: **£45**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ There are a number of Futurists to choose between. At the top of the range you'll find the £400 Leading Databank, which is a fully-fledged personal organiser on your wrist. This one, however, merely furnishes you with a backlight, stopwatch, alarm, phone book, countdown timer and dual time feature. Looks-wise, calling it "ugly" would be harsh, so best settle for "nice personality". While the clued-up understand this watch is a fashion statement direct from the cutting edge, the casual observer may mistake it for something you bought in a garage. ★★

Comedy on-line



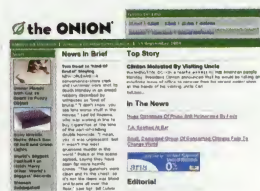
■ Eddie Izzard: am, jam, jam, jam. And a cat, drilling for oil.

IT'S A LAUGH, INNIT?

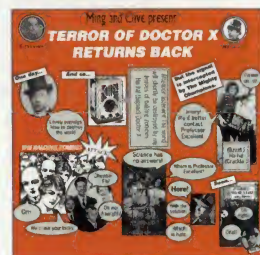
"What's that, then?" "The noise you make at the back of your throat when you hear a joke."



■ Old Man Murray: forget about the game reviews, visit it for the twisted views of one old man and two crippled brothers.



■ The Onion: officially the funniest page on the Internet. We said so.



■ Recognise the style? It's something scary from The Weekly. Super.

Comedy on the Internet can be a hit and miss affair, especially when you consider that the average Net-savvy geek has a humour level equivalent to one sixteenth of an episode of *Terry and June*. And for "comedy" to be distributed over the Internet, all you require is a computer, a phone line and the belief that you're funny. However, there are pluses to this state of affairs, one of which is that we can cut straight to the decent stuff.

Top of the pile is The Onion (<http://www.theonion.com>), a weekly slice of news parody produced in *USA Today* style, that's updated every Wednesday. Top headlines include Huge Quantities of Primo Shit Incinerated By Feds, Hamburglar Urges Senate Subcommittee To "Robble Robble Robble", and Owner Pleads With Cat to React to Fuzzy Object. Gory but gripping.

And also very American. If you long for some British flavour, head for The Weekly (<http://www.theweekly.co.uk>), which is a bi-weekly helping of odd headlines, strange stories and an unfeasibly stiff upper lip. Oh, and could that be *Arcade* contributor Jonathan Nash casting his comedy shadow over affairs? Yes, it is. Well done, well done.

Not strictly a comedy site, Old Man Murray (<http://www.oldmanmurray.com>) still manages to be one of the funniest things on the Net. It seems to have started out as a game review site and then got waylaid. Revel in the joys of its hit and run guestbook and its comparison of John Romero (Game designer. Potentially Central American) with Oscar Romero (Central American catholic priest. Potentially divine).

While *Arcade* isn't too keen on comedy fan worship sites as, well, they often aren't funny, Eddie Izzard's official site at <http://www.izzard.com> is worth a visit, but you might find the guestbook a little trying. A mountain of Izzardites going on about jam gets tiresome after a few seconds, but there are some rare Izzard gems on offer. Then head on to the ultimate *South Park* depository at <http://www.beef-cake.com>. Kick ass!

The match box

Mario nation

Mario

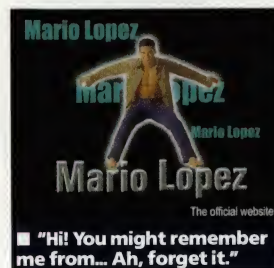
Search



■ Yet more illogical emissions from the gaping maw of the Internet search engine.

Mario Lopez Official Site
<http://www.mario-lopez.com/>

■ It turns out Lopez is one of the actors from cringe-fest *Saved by the Bell*. *Arcade* failed to register a glimmer of recognition for any of his other roles.



■ "Hi! You might remember me from... Ah, forget it."

Mario: A Tribute
<http://www.post-gazette.com/mario/>

■ Don't worry! Mario isn't dead or anything. This is a tribute to top ice hockeyist, Mario Lemieux. A giant among men. It seems.

Mario, the sugar glider
<http://www.pat.net/pat/mario/>

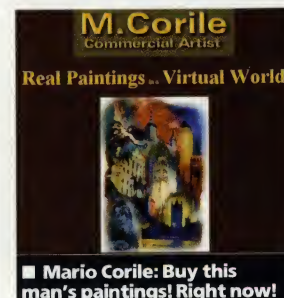
■ What's a sugar glider? "It's a marsupial that looks a bit like a little flying squirrel," says Mario's owner. Whatever, the little bugger is too cute for words. Ahhhhhh...

Mario Elie
http://www.nba.com/playerrfile/mario_elie.html

■ First an ice hockeyist, now a basketballateer. This is his official NBA page. And he's quite good.

Mario Botta
http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/Mario_Botta.html

■ Swiss-born architect Mario Botta's modernist approach was influenced by both Carlo Scarpa and Louis Kahn. Blimey.



■ Mario Corile: Buy this man's paintings! Right now!

Mario Corile
<http://www.mcorile.demon.co.uk/>

■ This Mario is an artist who specialises in paintings of London landmarks. Want to buy one of his pictures? Head along here.

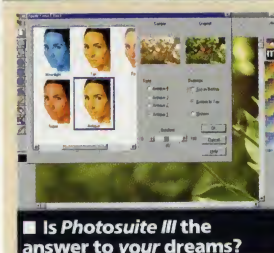
Mario Madriz
<http://www.art.net/Studio/Visual/Mmadriz/Mainpage.html>

■ "I invite you to navigate without compass in a world where North does not exist, where gravity is ruled by thought's magnetism and the only existing air is the one you exhale." Another crazy artist.

The Mushroom Kingdom
<http://www.classicgaming.com/tmk/>

■ At last! Some actual Mario, and this site is a non-stop Mariothon featuring everything Mario-related. It's updated regularly too.

CD-ROM of the month



■ Is Photosuite III the answer to your dreams?

PHOTOSUITE III PLATINUM EDITION

■ Publisher: MGI Software
■ Developer: MGI Software
■ Price: £50
■ Release date: on sale now
■ Requires: P166, 32Mb RAM

■ Into photography are you, sir? Like taking pictures do you? Ooh! Snapshots is it? Snapshots of ladies, sir? Would you like to manipulate them sir? Ooh I bet you would sir. Well it's your lucky day sir, because we've got a little something under

the counter that should "suit you" right down to the ground.

Photosuite III Platinum Edition is the answer to every amateur snapper's dreams. Every tool you've ever dreamt of is enclosed here for you to fiddle with; from the conventional cropping tools and filters (of which there are more than 30), to the rather more exotic, modern tools such as photo-montage, photo-stitching and Power Goo-style image stretching.

There are hundreds of props for you to play around with, and more than 30,000 images to choose from, although the friendly input interface and seamless Internet integration (including the ability to create your own Web pages) means it's simplicity itself to slip a few shots of your own into your drive bay. And, when you finally do tire of trying out all the tools, there's a superb photo-album feature to keep all of those "special" snaps in order. Ooh, did we forget to mention the *slideshow*, sir? Photosuit you! ★★★★★ Chris James

Next month

DONKEY KONG 64

*Arcade goes ape over the biggest game on the N64 since *Zelda*, plays it to the edge of monkey madness and asks: what went right, what went wrong, and what's next for Nintendo?*



Arcade



Plus Gran Turismo 2

The best racer just got better. Reviewed in full.

Arcade 14 on sale Monday 6 December.

Arcade

Issue 7 June



■ Driver, Star Wars game previews, My Beautiful Cross-Channel Ferry.

Issue 8 July



■ 3D shooter special, the new Lara unveiled, win a Space Invaders coin-op.

Back issues

They say it ain't where you're from, it's where you're at. But that's like telling an Arsenal fan to embrace Manchester as his home at an away clash with the champions. Nonsense.

Issue 9 August



■ Star Wars special, games night with WWF wrestlers and sexy girls at E3.

Issue 10 September



■ Future of Gaming special, Game Boys in the park and Roger Mellie on rude words in Kingpin.

Issue 11 October



■ Free Wipeout 3 music CD, the BITS girls and The Great Football Game Debate continues.

Issue 12 November



■ Sega's new system sussed out, clued-up kids and a look at the Christmas games deluge.

Back issues

If you fancy getting hold of a back issue, all you need to do is tick the relevant box on this coupon and fill out the details. Make sure you've remembered to put the wedge and the coupon in the envelope, and send the whole lot to: **Arcade Back Issues, Future Publishing, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6BR.** Overseas readers should send the form to: **Future Publishing Ltd, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, England TA11 6TB.** However, if you long for human contact, call the hotline on 01458 271126.

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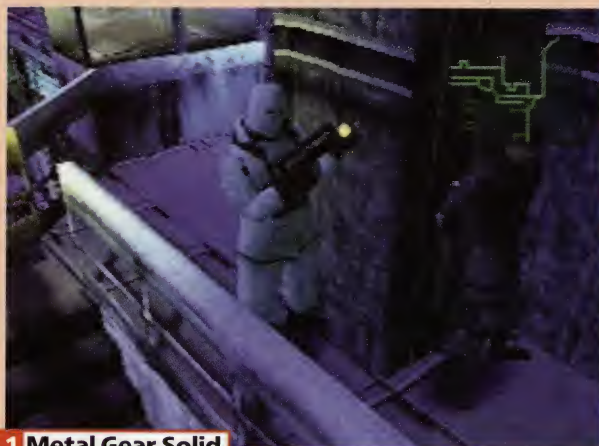
TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY **T3**

The A-list

Edited by | Jamie Sefton

Arcade's Top 20 PlayStation games

■ Enough full fat PlayStation produce to sustain your gaming gut until the 21st century.



1 Metal Gear Solid

■ Sneaker ■ Konami ■ £40

Infiltrate a shadowy enemy installation Metal Gear Solid is brilliant – sneak around and avoid detection rather than blasting everything in sight. Despite the end screen coming around after only a few hours, you'll adore every single minute of play. ★★★★★

2 Gran Turismo

■ Racer ■ SCE ■ £20

Probably the best racer in the world Take one measure of outrageously good graphics, another of near-perfect handling, a couple of pinches of immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth, and you've got an unmissable pleasure pie. Ridiculously realistic, replays you'll want to watch annoyingly often – it's like taking all your favourite cars for a test drive! Another PlayStation classic that defined a genre. ★★★★★



3 Tekken 3

■ Fighter ■ Namco ■ £35

Adept slapping Major improvement to the prequels in almost every way: graphically flawless and the new moves add something for both newcomers and veterans alike. A wide variety of sub-games, bonuses and hidden characters, as well as a frightening difficulty level, means there's so much to do that it's almost the Mario of fighting games. But without the cute stuff, obviously. ★★★★★



4 ISS Pro '98

■ Sports ■ Konami ■ £40

Frighteningly addictive footy sim Certainly the best football game on PlayStation and arguably on any system. With silky play, perfect motion-capture, scores of teams, comedy player names and the most intuitive control system this side of a light switch; you'll lose years and a few friends the second you first switch it on – which is what quality gaming is all about, surely. ★★★★★



5 Tomb Raider

■ Adventure ■ Eidos ■ £20

Baps entertainment The original and, now that it's a Platinum-tastic £20, still the best of Lara's tomb ransacking antics. The second outing didn't add enough to the franchise and the third game, although hi-res and ambitious, smelt slightly of a rush job and lacked the unexpected level design that makes the first Tomb Raider still so special. Lovely. ★★★★★



6 Resident Evil 2

■ Horror Adventure ■ Capcom ■ £35

Sequel to the original gore-fest The ability to control two characters is gimmicky, and the puzzles are similar to the first incarnation, but RE2 is better than the original in all other respects. It will scare your skin off – a polished and very creepy package. ★★★★★



7 Driver

■ Racer ■ GT Interactive ■ £40

Stunning-looking '70s car-chase sim Rocket through real American cities, evading the Fith and causing upset for pedestrians. The missions don't vary much, but as a driving 'toy', Driver's unbeaten. Smashing through piles of boxes is thrilling, and the replay editor makes for added fun. ★★★★★



8 Wipeout 3

■ Racer ■ Psygnosis ■ £35

The future of racing As if the year 2097 wasn't far enough in the future, the Psygnosis boys have set this one in 2116. Every element has been improved and rather than attempt to reinvent the wheel/hover device, the inspiration here is a refreshingly playable back-to-basics approach. ★★★★★



9 Final Fantasy VII

■ RPG ■ SCE ■ £40

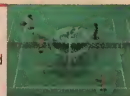
150 hours of epic adventure Takes all the usual RPG staples (moving around a landscape, chatting to the locals, solving puzzles) and adds cut-scenes that mix seamlessly with the moving characters, exciting conflicts and an engrossing story. ★★★★★



10 Anna Kournikova Tennis

■ Sports ■ SCE ■ £35

Quirky racquet-play Cute polygonal pros battle it out in a game that's a little more serious than previous Smash Court Tennis titles. Sublime controls and an addictive multi-player feature. In fact, this is by far the best game you can buy – so there. ★★★★★



11 Silent Hill

■ Horror Adventure ■ Konami ■ £40

Chillingly atmospheric scare-'em-up A seamless Resident Evil done. Grimy, decrepit, littered with hanging corpses and depressing enough to make you throw up a noose – all in splendid 3D. Only flawed by a few too many illogical puzzles. ★★★★★



12 Ridge Racer 4

■ Racer ■ Namco ■ £35

Super-fast racing Thrills come from the breathtaking speed at which the eight gorgeous tracks rush past and the brilliance of the two-player mode. Master the powerslide and you'll unlock 320 unique cars. If you're after realism, though, Gran Turismo is for you. ★★★★★



13 Colin McRae Rally

■ Racer ■ Codemasters ■ £20

Life-like rural driving sim A departure from the usual racing game, as your rally car rattles around countryside tracks with time and damage your only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give real driving feedback. And it's a bloody bargain at £20. ★★★★★



14 Doom

■ Shooter ■ GT Interactive ■ £20

Seminal corridor shoot-'em-up Superb conversion of id's breakthrough first-person shooter. Play a squaddie traipsing through future-dungeons, making bloody holes in whatever you meet. The graphics are out of date, but this enables the excellent level design and gameplay to shine. ★★★★★



15 MicroMachines V3

■ Racer ■ Codemasters ■ £20

Tiny cars race around your living room The old top-down 2D game souped-up into pseudo-3D, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a perfect overhead camera, plenty of amusingly behaved vehicles and a multi-player game that's ace. ★★★★★



16 Everybody's Golf

■ Sports ■ SCE ■ £35

Cartoon-style stick-and-ball antics Simplistic looks, but complex gameplay, with an arcade slant that injects a welcome burst of speed and a host of hidden extras. Great if you don't take golf seriously. ★★★★★



17 Ape Escape

■ Platformer ■ SCE ■ £35

Satisfying simian search Catching panicky monkeys with nets refreshes the platforming genre, while the coin-collecting sub-quest and bonus games ramp up replayability. The true 3D world looks lovely, the controls are perfect and it's fun and challenging too. ★★★★★



18 LMA Manager

■ Sport ■ Codemasters ■ £40

Finely-tuned footballing excellence Finally, a football manager game on a console that's worth its weight in balls. A great interface, nifty transfer system and the real names of the players create a cracking management sim that even Ruud Gullit could master. Premier League stuff. ★★★★★



19 Brian Lara Cricket

■ Sports ■ Codemasters ■ £40

Leather-on-willow simulator This cricket sim is so realistic that you know it's your fault when you're losing. It's painfully hard, but surprisingly playable and very well-crafted, with the commentary and graphics in particular standing out. ★★★★★



20 Crash Bandicoot 3

■ Platformer ■ SCE ■ £35

Maniacal pseudo-3D antics Control a mad marsupial as he runs headlong into the screen, collecting apples and avoiding the bad guys. The best of the three aided greatly by groovy new 3D levels. Still not a Mario-beater though. ★★★★★



TOP 5 PLAYSTATION GAMES TO PLAY WITH YOUR GRANDMOTHER



- 1 Driver**
Reflections
Begin by impressing her with your safe driving skills.
- 2 Theme Hospital**
EA
Should start off a lovely conversation about piles.
- 3 WWF Warzone**
Acclaim
Quickens the blood of any pensioner. She'll be screaming "Rip his arms off!" in no time.
- 4 Um Jammer Lammy**
SCEE
Gran's taken too many pills? This is ideal entertainment.
- 5 Time Crisis**
Namco
Teach her to shoot like a bitch.

So, you've got one of those new-fangled games playing things, then? Well done, but wait up... you don't want to go buying titles with as much replay value as the Second World War, do you? Try on *Arcade's* favourites for size.

Arcade's Top 20 PC games



1 Half-Life

■ Shooter ■ Sierra ■ £35

Stunningly atmospheric first-person shooter Built with a truly terrifyingly believable environment and logic puzzles, and incorporating mind-bogglingly intelligent bad guys and a decent amount of gorgeous all-out alien-blasting. ★★★★★

2 Quake II

■ Shooter ■ Activision ■ £20
Seminal first-person baddie-beater More of one of the finest games in the world. *Quake II* is best played over a network and offers bigger and better (although not cleverer) monsters, massive guns, improved level designs and a customisable game engine. The deathmatch-based sequel, *Quake III: Arena*, is imminent, so you may want to wait for that. ★★★★★



3 Curse of Monkey Island

■ Adventure ■ LucasArts ■ £40

Fantastic point-and-click adventure Genuinely amusing and with clever puzzles, *The Curse of Monkey Island* scores well for its controls, which make exploring and examining as easy as possible. Great to look at and to listen to, if a tad frustrating and illogical, but mostly top notch throughout. ★★★★★



4 Tiberian Sun

■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £40
Engrossing and imaginative strategy game Just like its predecessors, *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert*, the emphasis in *Tiberian Sun* is on total warfare. You're constantly teetering on the brink of disaster – make the wrong strategic choices and your army will get its arse kicked, but plan well and victory will be yours... eventually. ★★★★★



5 TOCA 2

■ Racer ■ Codemasters ■ £35
Heavily realistic revs Even with 15 cars jostling for position in front of you, *TOCA 2 Touring Cars* always looks stunning. The realistic handling makes free-wheeling over the varied courses a pleasure, and the added support races supply extra value-for-money. ★★★★★



6 Unreal Tournament

■ Shooter ■ GT Interactive ■ £40
A pre-Quake deathmatch revolution Gorgeous, quick, frantic, brilliant. Tremendous AI bots, plenty of big guns, loads of options – everything. But be warned, a hefty PC is required to do the masterpiece any kind of justice at all. ★★★★★



7 Grim Fandango

■ Adventure ■ LucasArts ■ £35
You look like Death warmed up The style, presentation and content of this odd, amusing adventure leave it towering above everything else. The puzzles are obscure, but you'll forgive it, thanks to neat touches, absorbing plot and downright loveliness. ★★★★★



8 Championship Manager 3

■ Sports ■ Eidos ■ £30
Out-coach Hoddle Sixteen global leagues, 35,000 players and fine detail make this the definitive management title. There's a sensible control system, your decisions affect every match and the interface works a treat. A comprehensive tactics editor too. ★★★★★



9 Tomb Raider III

■ Puzzle ■ Eidos ■ Exx
The intelligent girl with the gun is back A tendency toward sudden death, coupled with the same inadequate controls and frustrating, difficult puzzles. But it's *Tomb Raider*! You get intelligent level design, gob-smackingly gorgeous graphics and plenty of pathways to choose.. ★★★★★



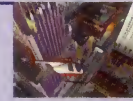
10 Dungeon Keeper 2

■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £35
Prepare to unleash the beast within This strategy masterpiece bubbles and seethes with a pitch-black humorous atmosphere. And it's non-repetitive! If you're going to open one intellectual bottle this year, *Dungeon Keeper 2* is really the one to savour. ★★★★★



11 Sim City 3000

■ Strategy/God ■ EA ■ £35
City-'em-up Initially disappointing, but lurking underneath the familiar features are some far more intuitive controls, and the joy of seeing your creation grow. There are none of the battles you'll see in so many strategy titles, but *Sim City* is still old-fashioned fun. ★★★★★



12 Alien Vs Predator

■ Shoot-'em-up ■ EA ■ £40
She's a bitch, he's invisible and they're expendable So much more than a *Quake* done. Atmospheric, gorgeous, truly frightening, bloody hard. Play as a marine and your motion tracker will beep in constant panic – worth the asking price alone. ★★★★★



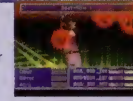
13 Flight Simulator '98

■ Flight sim ■ Microsoft ■ £40
Ultra-realistic aeroplane antics Not for the casual gamer, including, as it does, a load of knobs to control. It's supposed to be a true flying experience, so the controls are difficult to use, however some of the graphics aren't very realistic. There's a difficult-to-control helicopter included too. ★★★★★



14 Final Fantasy VII

■ RPG ■ Eidos ■ £20
PlayStation's best RPG arrives on PC A great story, lavish graphics and brilliant selection of spells. It's a little confusing, rarely enabling you to see your opponents before you get into a fight, but put this down to Japanese quirkiness and you're on to a winner. ★★★★★



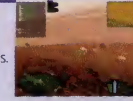
15 Worms: Armageddon

■ Party ■ Hasbro ■ £30
Takey-turney slap-'em-up Destroy your opponent's pink 'uns with an arsenal of both serious and comedic weapons. As with earlier incarnations, this loses much in one-player, but flawless controls and eye-popping visuals create a multi-player gem. ★★★★★



16 Battlezone

■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Activision ■ £13
Retro tank battling The gameplay is lightly based on the classic monochrome tank coin-op, but manages to throw in plenty of novel elements. A well executed mix of in-cockpit combat and resource management, with cleverly designed missions and plenty of variety. ★★★★★



17 Kingpin

■ Shoot-'em-up ■ Interplay ■ £30
Pop a cap in you mamma's ass, bitch An ultra-violent, ultra sweaty, retro-futuristic gangster romp. In fact it's funning great, you cusk! One-player is totally immersive and you feel proud to finally be playing a proper 'grown-up' game which in fact is utterly childish. ★★★★★



18 Delta Force

■ Strategy/God ■ EA ■ £40
Gung-ho army squad action Realistic simulation of battles, this time with a mission-based structure. Although it is possible to embark on a crazed killing spree, true pleasure comes from indulging in the tricky tasks proper. ★★★★★



19 Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

■ Sports ■ Virgin ■ Exx
The Whirlwind's genius captured in a videogame Bodiless opponents queue up to thrash you at snooker and every form of pool known to man. The control system is gloriously smooth, and with ball physics as accurate as this, your actual gamewill improve tenfold. Class. ★★★★★



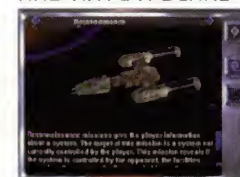
20 FIFA '99

■ Sports ■ EA ■ £35
Long-running official footy update All the visual frills, but scoring goals is much too easy, especially with the speedy players. More suited to beginners. ★★★★★



■ Welcome to the sort of PC perfection that'll have you huddled over the monitor until spring.

TOP 5 PC GAMES IF YOU'RE FAT, WEAR A METALLICA T-SHIRT AND HAVE A BEARD



- 1 **Star Wars: Supremacy**
LucasArts
Pull the curtains even tighter together and play this Darth Vader bore-fest.
- 2 **Discworld Noir**
GT Interactive
Pratchett-inspired fantasy unfunny-ness.
- 3 **Tomb Raider**
Eidos
Get the *Nude Raider* patch and hey, you needs a girlfriend?
- 4 **Star Trek: Federation**
Hasbro
A sci-fi hotel-in-space for all the family.
- 5 **Outcast**
Infogrames
That's you, that is.

The A-list

Arcade's Top 20 Nintendo 64 games

■ If harnessed, the joy generated by any one of these titles could heat a school for three weeks.



1 The Legend of Zelda

Best game in the world and that's a fact Traditional Zelda hallmarks wrapped up in a beautifully realised 3D world. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been fine-tuned until they're perfect. Worth of all the hype thanks entirely to the sheer genius of Shigeru Miyamoto. Maybe Sony should poach him. ★★★★★

2 Super Mario 64

■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £30
The king of 3D platformers A masterpiece, with huge levels, sublime controls and immersive gameplay. The game that invented a genre. As with all Miyamoto games, it slowly sucks you in and refuses to let go, and its full-on 3D graphics still impress. ★★★★★



3 GoldenEye

■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £30
Stealthy first-person shooter A believable and immersive 3D world, with 20 challenging missions taking you from gorgeous snow-covered wasteland to grubby men's toilets. One of the best multi-players that money can buy, too. Which is nice. ★★★★★



4 Mario Kart

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £30
Cute characters go to the races The original comedy racer returns. The one-player game is a lonely experience, but the time-trial adds longevity and the multi-player game is arguably the greatest on any platform. So addictive it could be classed as a legal drug! ★★★★★



5 Shadowman

■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Chock full of serial killers and all manner of dark grisliness A tidy, atmospheric next generation Quake with a decent plot and lashings of voodoo spookiness. Incredibly big, intelligent, rewarding, challenging and thoroughly deserving of your time. Classic stuff indeed. ★★★★★



6 Turok 2

■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £40
Dino hunting This looks stunning, and the game itself is helped by impossibly large guns and an end to the precision jumping nonsense that marred the original. The tasks may appear familiar if you're a Doom fan, though, and it's occasionally too difficult. ★★★★★



7 F1 World Grand Prix 2

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Damon Hill simulator Looking as good as real-life, with all the real cars, drivers, stats and other nonsense. Whether you're an arcade racer or a true F1 fan, there's something here for you, with a two-player option to round it all off nicely. ★★★★★



8 ISS '98

■ Sports ■ Konami ■ £40
Tremendous goal-fest The N64's best footy sim and arguably the best on any system. Oh so intuitive controls, silky smooth animation and very nearly as addictive in multi-player as the mighty Mario Kart. You will lose months of your life. ★★★★★



9 1080 Snowboarding

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Snow-based racing A brilliant range of modes, plenty of tricks, and loads of boards and courses for you to have a crack at. You get beautiful controls, brilliant replays and challenging racing. A gorgeous, technically superb, super quick experience. ★★★★★



10 Banjo Kazooie

■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Bizarre bear-bird crossover Beautiful levels that beg you to explore, a genuine challenge with plenty of variety, and the first Rare game not to feature an eye-wincing amount of cute. Almost knocks Mario from his perch. Praise indeed. ★★★★★



11 Lylat Wars

■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £30
On-rails 3D space blast Loosely based on Starwing on the SNES, and intended to be an immersive, movie-like experience, with cut-scenes that ape films like Independence Day. It's too easy, but it's still addictive, well-crafted and frantic. Pure blasting action. ★★★★★



12 Pilotwings 64

■ Flyer ■ Nintendo ■ £30
Fly about a bit and cry at the difficulty of it all Along with Mario 64, this is the game that launched the N64. It boasts beautiful, realistic scenery and some of the hardest tasks this side of Mensa. Basically, it's a truly unique flying experience. ★★★★★



13 Quake II

■ Shooter ■ Activision ■ £50
Travel to Stroggos, massacre its people Non-stop action, plenty of secrets and a more than worthy sequel. Unfortunately the single-player lifespan is poor. But, in deathmatch terms, GoldenEye may have the brains, but Quake II has the brawn. ★★★★★



14 Wave Race 64

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £30
How jet-ski games should be done Water-based frolics that are second to none, even compared to coin-op titles at a thousand times the price. The tracks are beautiful, and the controls are as responsive and intuitive as you'd expect from Nintendo. ★★★★★



15 Diddy Kong Racing

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Super cute Mario Kart wannabe More satisfying and challenging than Mazza Kart in one-player, but doesn't match the "bastard! Just one more go then" factor in multi-player. And the characters are so sickly sweet that your guns may melt. ★★★★★



16 F-Zero X

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £30
Quick-as-you-like space-age racer The fastest, smoothest racer ever, thanks to its lack of graphical detail. The controls are sublime, the handling fantastic and the tracks horrifically difficult. But somehow there just isn't that usual Nintendo spark. ★★★★★



17 Snowboard Kids 2

■ Racer ■ Atlus ■ £60
Mario Kart of the slopes Race on everything from grass to the keys of a giant piano, relying on comedy power-ups to out-do your cutesy competitors. The fuzziness of the visuals is disappointing, but the multi-player mode excels. ★★★★★



18 Body Harvest

■ Shooter ■ Gremlin ■ £20
Bug-blasting B-movie invasion Lots of aliens, loads of weapons and vehicles, and five varied levels. The graphics are ropey, and the character dialogue terrible, but the mix of RPG and intense, panicky alien shooting works well. ★★★★★



19 Mario Party

■ Party ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Bring your own controller A traditional board game featuring all your favourite Nintendo characters and a plethora of original and enjoyable multi-player sub-games. Not good for solo gamers, but a laugh a minute with a bunch of friends. ★★★★★

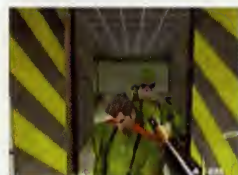


20 Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

■ Racer ■ Nintendo ■ £40
Force-based pod racing Great scenery, cool racing craft and – most importantly – speed. And a Star Wars licence, of course. The option to upgrade the pod is cool, and the similarity to Wipeout isn't a bad thing. No weapons, though, and too short. ★★★★★



TOP 5 NINTENDO 64 GAMES IF THE EARTH IS ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED BY A METEOR



- GoldenEye Nintendo**
Might as well play the best shooter ever before you cork it.
- Super Mario 64 Nintendo**
Escape from agony and death into a cute, cartoony world.
- Star Wars Episode 1: Racer Nintendo**
Force-inspired frolics. Get a quick game in before annihilation.
- Wave Race 64 Nintendo**
Tidal wave-tastic fun with this ker-razy jet-ski jamboree.
- South Park Acclaim**
This pile of Mr Hankey will make you beg for the apocalypse.

Arcade's Top 5 Dreamcast games



1 Sonic Adventure

■ 3D platformer ■ Sega ■ £40

Hedgehog heaven on Sega's new platform Steer spunky new Sonic around a wonderful new world, meeting up with his old friends Tails the Fox, Knuckles the um, echidna, and a rather sexy squirrel named Amy. It all makes perfect sense once you get going. ★★★★★

2 Power Stone

■ Beat-'em-up ■ Capcom ■ £40

The beat-'em-up bar brawl Welcome to the game where you can throw chairs, vases and tables at your opponent; the aim – quite simply – being to knock the gemstones out of them. Spring around the spaces like a new-born lamb. You looking at me? ★★★★★

3 Trickstyle

■ Racer ■ Acclaim ■ £40

Speedy tricks outside the red light district Welcome to the place where your *Back to the Future 2* dreams become reality, and play as a racer, a stunter or a bully on the mean streets of the 23rd century. A *Wipeout* wannabe that hits the spot. ★★★★★

4 Sega Rally 2

■ Racer ■ Sega ■ £40

Buckle up and live out your rallying fantasies Take to the tracks in the best looking racing sim you've ever seen. Once you've recovered from the hit of the graphics, take part in the Ten Year Championships to prove your mettle with the pros. ★★★★★

5 Virtua Fighter 3tb

■ Beat-'em-up ■ Sega ■ £40

Stalwart scrapper back to break you into 128-bits Duke it out toe-to-toe in this fine looking fighter that makes up for what it lacks in subtlety with old skool appeal. Fight on rooftops and get the drop on foe in the subway. Simple but effective. ★★★



■ Crazy Taxi: bonkers.

TOP 5 DREAMCAST GAMES ANNOYINGLY NOT YET AVAILABLE PART TWO

1 Crazy Taxi

Sega
Play the coolest cabby in this Arcade stunner.

2 Star Wars Trilogy

Sega
Smooth, silky blaster with no Jar Jar. Yeeessss!!!

3 Ecco the Dolphin

Sega
Swim about. Eat stuff. Meet other dolphins. Not bad eh?

4 Furballs

Acclaim
Mad cross between Mario and Cosgrove Hall cartoons. Looks fab.

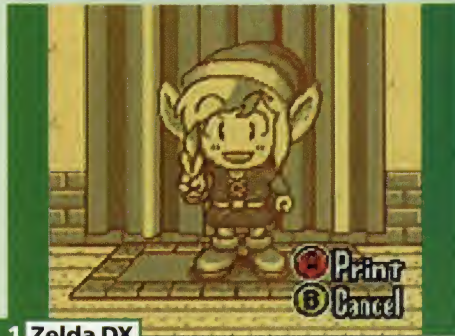
5 Resident Evil

C-V Capcom
Flesh-gobbling fun on Sega's finest. Delicious.



■ Furballs: pet-heavy.

Arcade's Top 10 Game Boy games



1 Zelda DX

■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £25

Puzzle-solving with your fave elf An involving plot, beautiful graphics, and a story where the emphasis is on engaging the player in the same way as *FFVII*. It's incredibly difficult, with a vast range of interesting challenges. A good one for the beach. ★★★★★

2 Tetris DX

■ Puzzler ■ Nintendo ■ £20

Brick drop return shock! The graphics, sounds and modes might have changed, but this is still the same old *Tetris*, known world-wide as the most addictive version of the Russian puzzler. It's *Tetris*! Quite simply, get it in. ★★★★★

3 Super Mario Bros Deluxe

■ Platformer ■ Nintendo

£25 Seminal Mario platformer Uncomplicated, hugely enjoyable platform brilliance, transferred to our portable friend after 14 years. Running, jumping and gobbling mushrooms has never been so much fun, and there's a shedful of extras! ★★★★★

4 R-Type Delta

■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £25

The daddy of side-scrolling shooters Arcade perfect, if inevitably small, conversions of *R-Type*, *R-Type II* and a groovy remix of the two all one one irresistible cart. Bloody hard too. ★★★★★

5 Super Mario Land

■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £15

The pipe man cometh One of the GB's original releases, *Super Mario* still excels in most areas, despite having reached a very elderly nine-years-old. The graphics are simple, but the subtlety of control and excellent level designs are top. ★★★★★

6 Tennis

■ Sports ■ Nintendo ■ £15

Racquet fun Despite its simplicity, *Tennis* is one of the most enjoyable such sims on any platform. With an addictive two-player option, a hard-to-beat computer opponent and some very intuitive controls, this is a great game. ★★★★★

7 Warioland 2 DX

■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £25

Mazza's arch enemy returns Features a novel "can't die" aspect and insists on you collecting all of the coins from each level, creating fist-denching difficulty in the process. Top quality and fiendishly challenging. ★★★★★

8 Defender/Joust

■ Retro ■ Midway ■ £25

Old coin-ops for your pleasure A double helping of retro arcade fare: a splendid side-scrolling shooter and a rather good fire-button-free flap-'em-up played on ostrich mounts. Oh the joy of holding old coin-ops in your palm. ★★★★★

9 Harvest Moon

■ Racer ■ GT Interactive ■ £20

Down on the farm... Clear your land, till the soil, plant some seeds – there aren't many farming sims out there, but *Harvest Moon* proves that they should be more popular than Lara. The detail is astonishing. There's so much stuff to do! ★★★★★

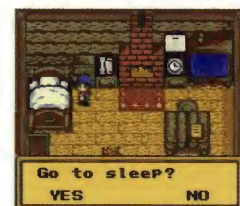
10 V-Rally

■ Racer ■ Infogrames ■ £25

Tip-top portable racetracks Eventful tracks, intelligent opposition and splendid scenery in this accomplished GB racer. With four cars, 20 tracks spread over 10 countries, and plenty of play modes – this'll last ya for ages. ★★★★★

■ Tiny treasures from the Game Boy stable.

TOP 5 GAME BOY GAMES YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH PLAYING IN CHURCH



1 Harvest Moon *THE* Perfect for festival time. Plough the fields and scatter your seed.

2 Legend of the River King *Nintendo* Catch a few trout, add a loaf and Jesus. Fish baps galore.


3 Holy Magic Century *Virgin* If Vicar sees this stuck in your Game Boy, he'll just smile approvingly.

4 Resident Evil *Capcom* Take on Satan and all his little helpers. Devilish.

5 Tetris DX *Nintendo* Drop a few blocks and before you know it, time for Sunday lunch.



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KICK ASS

BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT

HOW TO **SLIP INTO THE LEAD IN...**

WIPEOUT 3

Format: **PlayStation** | Publisher: **Sony** | Price: **£40** | Players: **1-2** | ★★★★★

Paul Daniels used to present a quiz show called *Wipeout*. It was crap. *Wipeout 3* for the PlayStation isn't. But it's hard. Here's a magic gaming wand that will pull winning white rabbits out of the futuristic racer-shaped hat. Now *that's* magic...

TEN TOP WIPEOUT TIPS



1. Use the analogue controller

Yeah, yeah, some people hate using the big rubber nipples, but with *Wipeout 3* it's worth the effort. Essential for swinging your slinky ship round those tight bends. Neep-tastic.



2. Get a jump start

Craftily match your speed with the Shield Energy bar when the countdown is commencing and you'll blast away with a satisfying rumble.



6. The pits

Use them – especially in two-player deathmatches and faster courses, or you'll keep grinding to a metal-crunching halt after one too many attacks or crashes and, before you know it, it'll be Welcome to the Frustration Circus, and you'll be the head down.



7. Hyper-thrust

It may be tempting to keep hitting that R1 button, but that's the chump's way of racing in the year 2116. Clever people in the future limit their hyper-thrust action to a few per race – and always on a straight piece of circuit. Don't use it if you're low on energy and you've missed the pits.

THE TRACKS

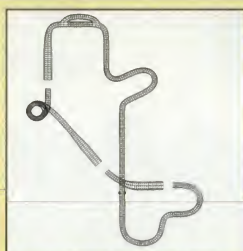
■ As every good cabbie knows, The Knowledge is what counts. Here are *Wipeout 3*'s track basics, which should spare you a few precious hours learning the ropes and pootling around the game as though you were aboard a dodgy moped with a clipboard accessory.

STANDARD CIRCUITS



Porto Xora

A kind of *Blade Runner*-esque Grimsby. This track eases you into the *Wipeout* world with simple turns and a good long straight. No problem.



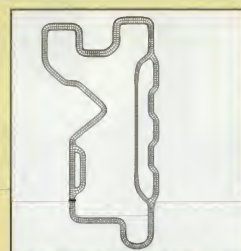
Mega Mall

A 22nd century shopping centre makes for a cracking course that has a very cool spiral. Rocket around the inside of the corkscrew, overtaking and blasting any ship that crosses your path.



Sampa Run

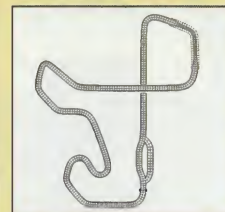
Set in the dodgy outskirts of the city, this future-noir course twists and turns through moody blue tunnels and rain-soaked overpasses. You'll need your airbrakes to survive.



Stanza Inter

This dash through an inner-city maze has a major split in the track half-way round. Take the right turn if you want to snake round some crafty corners and take the left if you can cope with a hair-raising run through the narrowest of back streets.

REWARD RACEWAYS



Hi-fumi

A terrifically fast track with some fiendish turns that sort out the Alan Bennets from the Lenny Bennets. Airbrake-massive in the area!

19 GAMES TIPPED THIS MONTH

TOP TIPS FOR EVERY SYSTEM

Edited by | **Jamie Sefton**

PLAYSTATION

P122 Wipeout 3
P126 Die Hard Trilogy
P126 Wipeout 2097
P127 Um Jammer Lammy

NINTENDO 64

P125 Shadowman
P126 Re-Volt
P126 F1 World Grand Prix

DREAMCAST

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COLOR GAME BOY

P125 Pokemon Pinball
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P126 Conker's Pocket Tales
P126 Game & Watch Gallery 2

PC

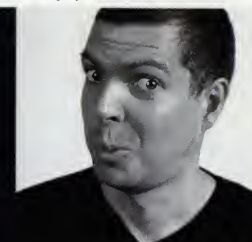
P126 Command & Conquer
Tiberian Sun
P126 Heavy Gear 2
P126 Descent 3
P127 F-22 Lightning 3
P127 Sled Storm

OTHER SYSTEMS

P126 Virtual Springfield

WELCOME

■ Well moi little beauties, we've some mind-bending tips and strategies this month to give you the opportunity to impress aunts, catwalk models, vicars and anybody else who might pop round for tea and tiffin. *Wipeout 3* is still the Arcade office fave at the moment and a thorough playing guide is



provided for your delectation. For that brand spanking new Dreamcast we've also thrown in terrific tips for the top titles. We're just too damn nice, that's our problem...



3. Master the air brakes

On the faster courses, these gizmos are the business. A tap here and there will save you having to reduce your speed on corners. As these brakes tend to cause the back of your ship to swing out, head for the inside of the bend before slamming the anchors on.



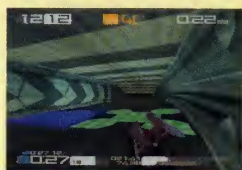
4. Crafty craft

When choosing your method of transport, go for the one that compensates for your weaknesses. So, if the opposition keep destroying your steed with a well-aimed rocket or, indeed, you deal with corners about as well as your local pub side, choose a team with the strongest shield.



5. Know your course

A bit obvious really, but get those tracks into your head so you can hyper-thrust without worrying about smashing into an oncoming wall. Persistent smashes slow you down, making you look a fool in the eyes of your adoring public.



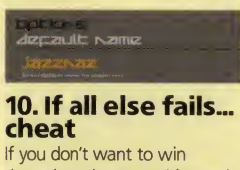
8. Slow down

Going hell-for-leather down the backstreets of a techno city isn't always the best way to win a race. Keep your cool, baby, and pick your moment to hit maximum velocity. Yeah.



9. Discard weapons

Remember you can hit the **@** button and get rid of inappropriate weapons. Auto-pilot is a particular nuisance if there's a bloody great big pile of mines scattered along the fastest point from A to B.



10. If all else fails... cheat

If you don't want to win through to the extra ships and tracks – as well as the hidden prototype courses – via the single races, go to the Options screen, select **game setup** and enter the following:

JAZZNAZ All the craft
WIZZPIG All the courses
AVINIT Phantom class racing. Fast

THE SHIPS

■ While a bad workman may blame his tools, an angry *Wipeouteer* has every reason to curse a ship for being slow/ unable to hack attack/ harder to handle than a hyperactive teen. The key is to select the one that suits your game.



Feisar

A good all-rounder. Crap speed, with a hefty thrust. Great to learn in.



Goteki 45

Poor speed, average handling with a big chunky shield on top. Not an Arcade favourite.



Auricom

There's nothing outstanding on this ship but, given time, it gets up a good speed.



Piranha-a

Sweet handling for corners but a weak shield. Keeps you on your toes.



Qirex

Supersonic ship that takes corners like a Lada. Not a great combination.



AG Systems

Weak shields let this ship down, but it moves as smoothly as a greased-up Shakin' Stevens on a luge.



Assegai

If you're crap at taking corners, this baby's for you. Just don't get shot, as the shield is held together with bits of string and Blu Tack.



Icaras

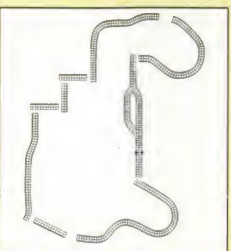
The fastest ship available for budding future boy-racers. Poor shield and handling could spoil the party.

■ Branson wondered if he had taken things too far this time...



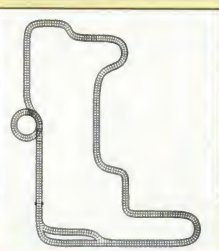
P-mar Project

As the pretty scented blossom floats through the spring sky, you'll find yourself cursing à la Glaswegian, as this track hides a bagful of spiteful swerves. There's an excellent fast straight, though, and the well-cool jumps will give you a warm glow inside.



Manor Top

Race high above the city, on a visually stunning track that has nightmare-inducing right angles. Swing hard into those tough corners and you'll fly round it in no time.



Terminal

Like the Mega Mall it has a spiral, but this one curls heavenwards. Beware the long straight near the finish, though, as it offers opponents a near unmissable opportunity to wreck your race-winning moment with a well-timed rocket up the jacksy. Ouch.



HOW TO BE BIONIC NOT CHRONIC AT... SONIC ADVENTURE

Half a dozen handy hints to help hinder those blue hedgehog blues...



Free rings

As Tails, find any place with grass and look for a dark green weed – if you hit this with your tail and you are lucky, a ring or

extra life will appear. Also, as Knuckles, if you already have the silver gloves, find a place where you can dig and, in most cases, you can uncover a stash of rings.

Aztec Forest

For a short-cut, ride the trolley to the end of the line then stand on the edge of the platform and look down and to the left. Fly toward the

nearest of the two trees sticking out of the canopy and land on top. Walk around the first tree until you fall through the canopy and you'll end up next to the emerald and frog.



Super stuff

Play through the game with every character and Super Sonic will be available – great for defeating Perfect Chaos. For Super Knuckles,

play through the game with all six characters, then complete it again as Knuckles. Quickly hold **Ⓢ + B** at the character screen selection. Knuckles will give you a thumbs up to confirm.



Secret puzzler

When starting up the game, place a controller into the D port on your Dreamcast and have a VMS in the controller. A hidden Chao tile-based puzzle

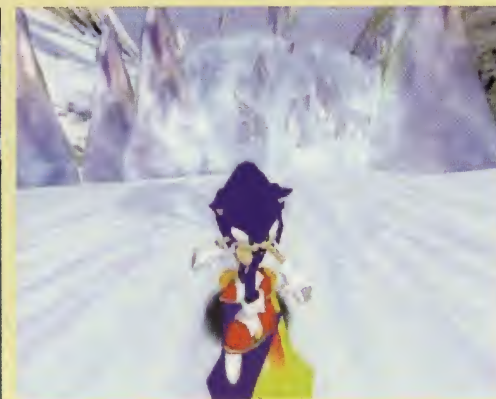
game will appear on the VMS. Use the controller to move the pieces of the picture to win.



New shoes

To get Sonic's super speed shoes, head towards where you first fought Chaos in Station Square. Go to the hole in the ground, fall in and follow

the path to a rainbow-coloured area. Step in, then speed until Sonic says "Ready?" and keep holding the speed button. Press the button with the star on it and let go of the speed button.



Sonic's snowboard selection

Before entering the snowboarding section in the ice stage, press **Ⓢ** to get

Sonic's blue snowboard (from Sonic 3) and press **B** to choose the yellow one.

SHADOWMAN

Head for the following locations and you'll see a message saying "cheat activated". The cheats should appear in The Book of Shadows (when you have it) in the inventory. Use the pad to turn the cheats on or off.

The Book of Shadows/Deadwing

When you get to the Asylum Playrooms, look for the room with a green bloke and a pool table. Jump on top of the pool table and you'll get the Book of Shadows and be able to play as Deadwing.

Play as Deadsider

Use the teddy bear to go to the gateway by the Asylum. On the bridge over some lava, face the door and drop off the left side of the bridge onto the path below. Follow the trail until you discover a dark soul in a room with rafters. Jump on one of the rafters to activate the cheat.

Play as Bloodshot

In the third Gad Temple, head for the room where you make the big hammer knock over

the pillar. Walk across the pillar looking for a small room on the right to jump into.

Stick Boy

On the first trial of the Loa (Temple of Fire) in the area with two blood falls, find the room with three blue voodoo sisters and a big ramp. Kill the sisters and make your way up the ramp until you reach the Ziggurat switch.

Wireframe mode

Go to Mordant Street, Queens and make for the top floor. Go through the only door and head right where you'll see two strange-looking floor panels. Jump over these and the cheat will be enabled.

Deadside Shotguns

After getting off the tram in the Cathedral of Pain, go straight on. On the left there's a ramp that leads to a lava flow between two platforms. Run on the flow of coals to the left until you see some rotating blades. Follow the path until you find a hole with a pole sticking through and fall through on the left-hand side.



GAME BOY

POKEMON PINBALL

Having trouble pocketing that monster? Help is at hand.

■ To catch a Pokemon easily, when the shadow appears, go to the top screen and hit a Voltorb or Shellder. Hold **A** or **B** and you'll hit the target rapidly.

■ Extra Poke balls? Get a Cave bonus and then, every 20th time the letters are hit, you'll get a bonus ball.

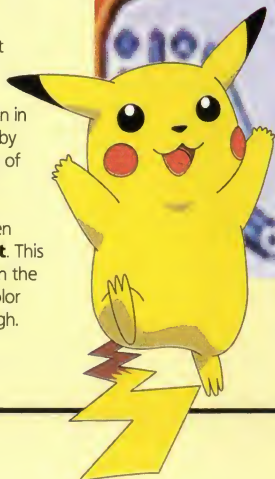
■ Special stages are accessible when you catch three Pokemon in one place.

■ Get a Great, Ultra or Master ball by turning

on all the lights at the top of either table.

Do this by going through the Field Multiplier Lanes and by using **Left** and **A** to move the lights so you can quickly upgrade your ball.

■ Finally, a bit of fun. Animate your Pokemon in the Pokedex by selecting one of the standard un-evolved monsters, then holding **Start**. This only works on the Game Boy Color version, though.



GAME BOY

R-TYPE DX



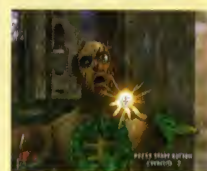
■ To restart the game at the level you were playing, hold down **B** and turn the Game Boy off and on. Keep pressing **B**, the Game Boy logo will appear and the level will load automatically.

■ To skip a level you've completed, pause the game and press **B**.

■ For the De Souza drawing editor, finish the colour versions of *R-Type 1* and *2* and *R-Type DX*. Then, at the main menu, press the D-pad Right and the option should appear.

DREAMCAST

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2



Top cat

Shoot the cats and they will lead you to a bonus. Shoot to get it.

Bonus room

To access the hidden room, you have to complete the game without killing any hostages or allowing any hostages to be killed.



UM JAMMER LAMMY



■ Johnny Morris is sadly no more, but here's some animal magic of a different kind.

Hidden stages

- Complete any two stages in the normal game. A new option will appear giving you two-player Lammies.
- Complete the one-player game and you can also play as PaRappa.
- Complete two-player Lammies and you can play two-player vs Lammies.
- Complete one-player PaRappa and you can play a two-player Lammie & PaRappa game.
- Complete two-player Lammie & PaRappa and you can play two-player vs Lammie & PaRappa.



PC

F-22 LIGHTNING 3

■ During the game hit **Ctrl-Enter**, type in a code and press **Enter**.

the truth is out there
Unlimited ammo
fight the future
Replenish ammo
trust no-one
Invincible
black oil
Refuel
i want to believe
No crash
ghostpit
Invisible plane
this isn't happening
Heal



GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE

With a self-satisfied grin on your face you complete *GoldenEye* for the eighth time. But can you take the heat of our gameplay challenges?



PC

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

■ Challenge: **Redeemer rampage**

■ With this challenge, start a practice session with 16 bots on the Tournament Deathmatch on the Barricade map. Get to the square turret above by grabbing the boots on the battlements and jumping into it. Help yourself to the Redeemer and, by pressing the right mouse-button, guide the lovely missile into the castle taking out as many unfortunate souls as you possibly can. Repeat until satiated.



PC

CARMAGEDDON 2

■ Challenge: **Kill canines**

■ One for all psychopathic cat-lovers. Start a new game on the Nice Beaver level and try to run over and kill as many of man's best friend as you can before you run out of time. You are not allowed to get extra seconds by hitting other cars or pedestrians – however tempting – and any deaths of this kind mean you have to start the challenge again. *Arcade* managed a Rolf Harris's nightmare number of 11 dead dogs.



GAME BOY

DEFENDER

■ Challenge: **Survival**

■ If you think you're tough, try this. Zoom along the bottom of the screen shooting all of the humans until the planet is destroyed. The Celine Dion has now hit the fan and the object is to score as many points as possible by blasting the aliens without using smart bombs. *Arcade* managed a supreme score of 4,700 without the aid of artificial stimulants. As pop-eccentric Michael Jackson once said, "Beat it".



NINTENDO 64

V-RALLY

■ Challenge: **Reverse racing**

■ *V-Rally* is a pretty tough game anyway, but here's a challenge that will test the skill and patience of rally drivers called Colin everywhere. You can use any car or course but you have to complete a lap on reverse view only, by holding **R**. The controls for left and right are reversed too, remember, which makes it extra tough. Get revving.



PLAYSTATION

BUSHIDO BLADE

■ Challenge: **Running battle**

■ Revel in a game that requires patience, skill and a warrior instinct, although you won't need any of those for this challenge. When the fight starts, run away from your opponent using **L1**. Keeping the **Run** button pressed, try to take out your opponent by swinging your weapon wildly and timing your approach until you deal the fatal blow. This is fantastic in two-player mode after a good drinking session. See who can do the most ridiculous, extravagant approach before making a kill.



DREAMCAST

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

■ Challenge: **Make like a cowboy**

■ As a child, we all dreamt of being a cowboy, bursting through the saloon doors and shooting as many card-playing baddies as you have rounds of bullets. In this challenge you must play the game as if you're the star of a spaghetti Western. Stand up, holding the gun by your side (or in a holster if you can get one) during the movie sequences, then shoot the zombie scum like you're Clint Eastwood, and don't use the sight to aim. Warning: make sure nobody sees you, or public humiliation will follow.

PLAYSTATION

SLED STORM

■ To get the Storm Sled, go to the options screen, select **Load/Save** and then the **Password** option. Press **○**, **△**, **○**, **R2**, **R2**, **L1**, **○**, **○**.
■ To play as Jackal, press **L2**, **L2**, **○**, **R2**, **○**, **R1**, **L1**, **○** at the password screen.
■ Kill a rabbit by running into it and you'll get an extra 7500 points.



CLOCKING OFF

That really hurt. We've kicked ass so hard this month that there are going to be permanent bruises. Join us for some more vicious game beatings in the *Arcade* back alley next month. Bring a friend – no weapons. Okay?

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November 1988



R-Type of game

Programming nightmare delivers the goods on the humble Spectrum.

Had you strolled into a certain amusement arcade on London's Oxford Street 11 years ago, you might have caught sight of programmer Bob Pape. If you'd looked more closely, you would have seen that he was playing shoot-'em-up *R-Type*. And if you'd listened very carefully, you would have heard Bob mutter: "I pity the poor sod who programs this for the Spectrum".

You can probably guess what happened next. Bob, fancying a challenge, worked with artist Mark A Jones and musician Rob Hylands on a Spectrum version of the same game until November 1988. It wasn't easy as *R-Type* was fast, colourful and smooth – qualities the Speccy struggled to re-create all at once. But the end result was closer to the original arcade machine than anyone dared imagine.

You got it all, right down to the way the game's title zoomed and unfolded onto the screen at the start. But it wasn't easy.

As Mark Jones admits: "I wasn't exactly confident at being able to pull off *R-Type*,



R-Type

■ Publisher: **Electric Dreams**
 ■ Developer: **Catalyst Coders**
 ■ Genre: **Shoot-'em-up**
 ■ Platform: **Spectrum, Atari ST**
 ■ Players: **1**

■ Score: **9/10**
Your Sinclair
 "As addictive as Angel Delight and twice as butterscotchy. It's a corker."

especially when Activision decided it wanted full-colour graphics. Bob was great, though – he programmed a drawing tool for me, then told me he'd try to work in anything I created."

Bob admits that this approach helped push the team forwards: "We felt we had to live up to those graphics. Mark was giving me stuff that was really close to the arcade original, so I made sure I squeezed it in."

Even when Bob had worked out how to move multi-coloured spaceships around a smooth-scrolling landscape, recreating the guts of the game was a struggle.

"We were sent some wonderful documentation from original developer Irem," remembers Bob, "but it was all in Japanese. It was finally translated into English – two months after we'd finished the game." Subsequently, Bob had to trace enemy patterns using acetate and a felt-tip.

With no modem to hand Mark, in Portsmouth, and Bob, in Wales, were forced to swap cassettes full of code by post, but progress still continued

apace. "I was most pleased with that monstrous spaceship on Level 3," says Mark. "It was about two or three screens wide. Nothing like that had ever been done before."

Bob recalls that "once we'd cracked that ship, we knew we could do the whole game". And Spectrum *R-Type* already had fans. "I'd take a demo to Activision," says Bob, "they'd put it on, then run off yelling at other people to come and see."

The final game was fast, colourful and smooth, and by far the most enjoyable shoot-'em-up on the 8-bit systems. Apart from an absent Level 8 (caused by a duplication mix-up), everything from the arcade original was there – the detachable

"We were sent some wonderful documentation, but it was all in Japanese."

pod power-up, the variable-power blue laser, and the infamous embryonic Level 1 boss.

"The magazines went apeshit over it," recalls Mark. "Activision won a whole load of awards too, which we never really saw."

If Mark and Bob expected that to be the end of their *R-Type* story, they were in for a shock. Mark created the graphics for the Atari ST version and both helped code several Game Boy versions, including the recent *R-Type DX*. "I have a feeling I'm going to be haunted to the grave by *R-Type*," admits Bob. Pity the poor sod..



Games of the month It's 1988, and this is what you were playing.



Bombuzal

System: **Amiga/ST**
 Publisher: **Imageworks**
 ■ An odd-looking puzzler, recently resurrected in the form of *Charlie Blast's Territory* on the N64. The task – detonate bombs without being caught in the blast – was pleasingly tricky, and one of the levels was apparently designed by moonwalker Neil Armstrong. Gasp!
 ■ ACE: 919/1,000



Cybernoid II

System: **Spec/C64**
 Publisher: **Hewson**
 ■ Raffaele Cecco's sequel to his popular 8-bit shooter, and a more-or-less identical game. Multi-screen shoot-'em-ups wouldn't stay popular for much longer, but Cecco's fast, colourful games had their own cult following. Bob Pape, author of *R-Type*, respected Cecco as someone who "knew what they were doing".
 ■ ACE: 672/1,000



Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge

System: **All**
 Publisher: **Ocean**
 ■ An update of classic joystick-waggler Daley Thompson's *Decathlon*, with the afroed one entering ten finger-snapping events once again. This time, there was a training section where Lucozade could be earned – a wafer-thin product placement if ever there was one.
 ■ ACE: 680/1,000



Driller

System: **Amiga/ST**
 Publisher: **Incentive**
 ■ The solid 3D landscapes of the 8-bit originals had everyone gobsmacked, and the 16-bit versions did the same, with full-colour 3D zipping around the screen at a staggering pace. In retrospect, the puzzles were a little simplistic, but technically, it was a knock-out.
 ■ ACE 963/1,000



Operation Wolf

System: **Spec/C64/Ams**
 Publisher: **Ocean**
 ■ Arriving in a blaze of hype, *Operation Wolf* lost something in the translation from coin-op to home computer – namely, a full-size replica of a Uzi 9mm. The C64's mouse control went some way to replicating the frantic bullet-pumping play of the original, but it still worked much better in the arcades.
 ■ ACE: 894/1,000



Pepsi Mad Mix

System: **Spec/C64/Ams**
 Publisher: **US Gold**
 ■ A tie-in between Birmingham-based US Gold and America's Pepsi, programmed by Spanish developers Dinamic and based on classic Japanese game *Pac Man*. The chance to win a Pepsi prize by completing the game was tempting, but otherwise this was just weird – especially when Pac turned into a hippo.
 ■ ACE: 524/1,000



Pleasure Drome

The game that flopped, only to spawn Wipeout.

There are only a few games from the '80s that can lay claim to profoundly influencing the state of gaming today. *Super Mario Brothers* is one. *Pole Position*'s another. And then there's *Powerdrome*...

Powerdrome? You probably won't recognise the name because, unlike *Mario* and *Pole Position*, Electronic Arts' Atari ST title didn't shape videogames today by being wildly popular. In fact, it didn't have much of an effect on gaming at all until the mid-'90s, when a group of coders from Psygnosis, about to embark on a futuristic racer for Sony's new console, used *Powerdrome* as their blueprint. In time, that racer became *Wipeout*, a game without which there wouldn't be god knows how many million PlayStations scattered around the world today.

So why isn't *Powerdrome* up there with *Wipeout* on the fabled list of All-Time Greats? Mainly because its controls rendered it near-unplayable. Unlike Psygnosis' game, where you only need to steer left and right, *Powerdrome* pilots needed to use the mouse to bank, dive and climb their way through six truly three-dimensional courses. Auto-centring didn't exist – after every turn, rotating the craft to an upright position relied solely on the player's trembling fingers.

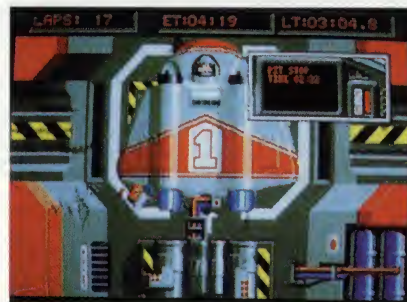
For those that did persevere, though, there was some breathlessly exciting racing to be had. Without The Designers Republic to hand, *Powerdrome* had to make do with flat, two-colour walls and tracks.

Sadly, there were no weapons to smack your opponents with, but there was a handy afterburner button for those sneaky overtaking

moments – if you could cope with the sudden, mind-bending burst of speed.

With its comprehensive and confusing range of vehicle set-up options, *Powerdrome* was effectively the *Gran Turismo* of its day. Most players shook their heads bemusedly at the sight of options such as "Fuel mixture", "Aileron size" and "Pitch-roll setting", but experienced 'dromers could tinker with them all and create a craft perfectly suited for the horrors ahead. However, even experts could never claim complete mastery.

By improving the controls, sprinkling the tracks with trendy DR imagery and chucking in a host of ground-shaking weapons, *Wipeout* turned *Powerdrome* into something truly great – "the game that *Powerdrome* should have been", as one reviewer put it. But it's worth remembering, as you wrench your copy of *Wipeout 3* from the shopkeeper's wizened hands, that Psygnosis – and Sony – probably owe it all to an unattractive, uncontrollable game from 1988.



■ Forget pit blokes – in the future, everything will be carried out by robots.



Gaming round-up

Also going on this month



■ Joe Blade 4: Play Pac Man while it loads.

PC2000 flop

■ Amstrad's Sinclair Professional PC200 computer arrived to a general state of apathy. Designed as a "serious games machine", it was expensive, ugly, under-powered and unattractive compared to the Amiga and Atari ST. Standing practically no chance of success to begin with, the final nail was hammered into the PC200's coffin when Amstrad launched it without any manuals or software. Smart.

Free gifts

■ More launch madness as Commodore produced two new "added value" packages for the ageing Commodore 64. The first featured a bundle of awful film-licensed games, while the second – the Family Entertainment Pack – came with a "free" Yamaha keyboard. To enable you to create music on your computer? Sadly, no. Missing from the

package was any means to link computer and keyboard together.

Easy loading

■ After six years of waiting for games to load from cassette, 8-bit owners had something to slightly raise the corners of their mouths over. Publisher Players launched a batch of titles with simple games that could be played while the main game loaded. Meanwhile, 16-bit owners laughed maniacally as their disk-based games took seconds to finish booting up.

R-Type control

■ An article in *ACE* magazine revealed just how closely Activision was guarding its *R-Type* licence. Five games which allegedly borrowed heavily were scrutinised, resulting in Rainbow Arts' *Katakis* being withdrawn from sale. Interestingly, a *Katakis* in-game message listed *R-Type* as an inspiration

YOUR SINCLAIR SPECTRUM TOP 10

- 1 Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge Ocean
- 2 Football Manager II Addictive
- 3 Road Blasters US Gold
- 4 Target Renegade Imagine
- 5 Street Fighter Go!
- 6 Out Run US Gold
- 7 The Empire Strikes Back Domark
- 8 Mickey Mouse Gremlin
- 9 We Are The Champions Ocean
- 10 Karate Ace Star Games

TOP 10 RATED GAMES – ACE MAGAZINE

- 1 Sentinel Firebird, 963
- 2 Driller Incentive, 956
- 2 Tetris Mirrorsoft, 956
- 2 ATF Digital Integration, 956
- 5 Powerplay Arcana, 955
- 6 Bonecruncher Superior, 948
- 7 Nebulous Hewson, 943
- 8 Colossus Mah Jong CDS, 937
- 9 Quedex Thalamus, 934
- 10 Xor Logotron, 927
- 10 Starglider II Rainbird, 927

WORLD NEWS HEADLINES

Grant freeze

■ Government plans to freeze student grants and phase in a series of student loans led to demonstrations and riots in London. Westminster Bridge was blocked, causing London's

worst ever traffic jam, according to police.

Bush for president

■ George Bush was promoted from Vice-President to President by America voters. The Republican candidate

secured the majority of the vote with his "Read my lips – no new taxes" pledge. Bush turned out to be fibbing.

Stealth bomber

■ The Lockheed F-117A Stealth Fighter was unveiled by the US Air Force. Constructed from radar-absorbent materials, the Pentagon claimed that the F-117A should be all but invisible to enemy detection. "I can't see it", said a sceptic.

Back in the USSR?

■ Russia began to feel the strain, as the republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania called for greater autonomy from Moscow's control. This unprecedented defiance would soon grow into full-scale revolution, and the dissolution of the USSR.

MUSIC CHARTS

1 November 1988

- 1 Orinoco Flow Enya
 - 2 Je Ne Sais Pas Pourquoi Kylie Minogue
 - 3 One Moment in Time Whitney Houston
 - 4 We Call It Acided D-Mob
 - 5 A Little Respect Erasure
- Information CIN

FILM CHARTS

1 November 1988

- 1 A Fish Called Wanda
- 2 Good Morning Vietnam
- 3 Midnight Run
- 4 Buster
- 5 Au Revoir les Enfants



■ Oh, sorry... didn't see you there.



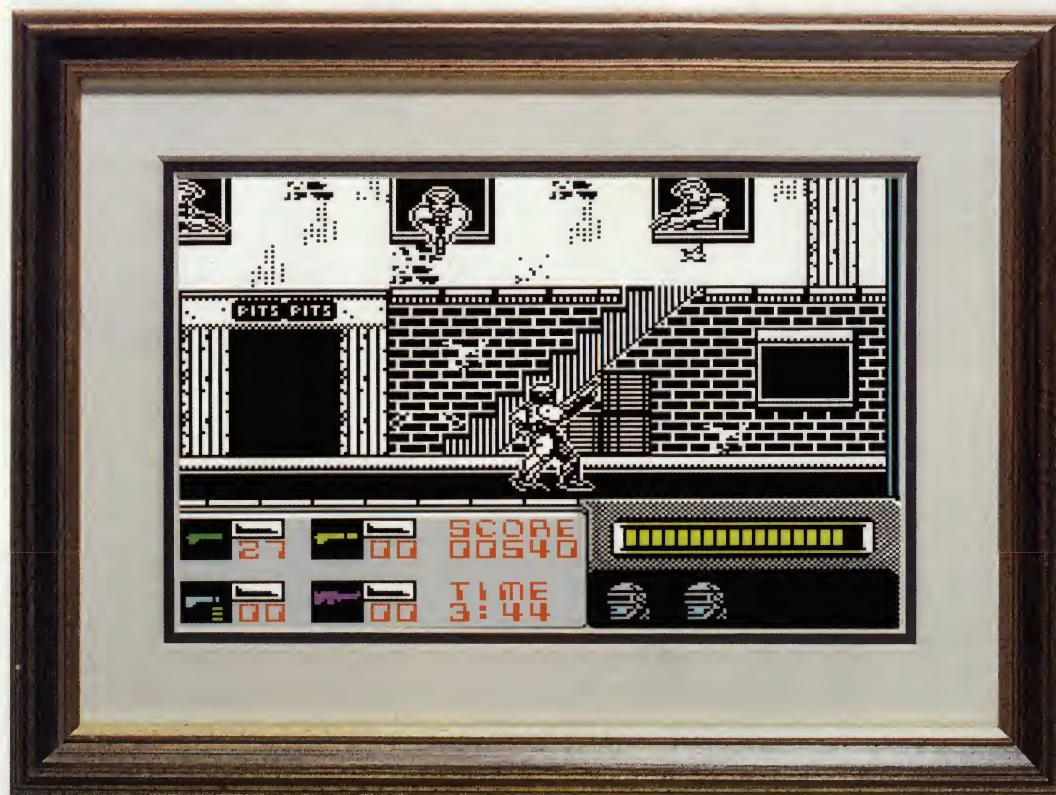
■ Remember, kids, guns aren't big or clever. Still – doesn't this guy just look the coolest?

■ PHOTOGRAPHY: ACTION IMAGES

Remembered by | Steve Lawson

20 seconds to comply

"Dead or alive, you're coming with me." Robocop was the first game to tell you where to go.



Things were different in 1989. If you wanted to take in some seriously tasty graphics and crisp, floorboard-rocking sound effects, you had to troop down to your nearest arcade and shuffle meekly past the tough older lads. These were the days before PlayStations, N64s, Dreamcasts and SCART technology so – for the less self-confident gamer – the closest you ever came to experiencing the wonder of cutting edge videogames was via the humble, housebound and headlock-free zone that was the ZX Spectrum.

But there was something special, something strangely and intangibly cool about the Spectrum and its games. Admittedly by today's standards the graphics and sound were poorer than a first-time housebuyer in negative equity, but even in the late '80s the Spectrum still had a few tricks left up its sleeve. Of course, there

were those who had turned their backs on Sir Clive's digital seed: those turncoats who now pledged allegiance to their Amigas and Atari STs. Oh, how they used to boast, and mock those who had kept the faith.

How sweet it was, then, when the coolest officer of the law since, er, TJ Hooker extended his beat from the downtown arcades to the homes of Spectrum owners everywhere. The rozzer in question, of course, was Robocop – the bionic, baddy-bashing bobby of cinema fame. In the flick, Murphy was just an ordinary lawman until some uncouth gangster types blew his arm and half his dome off with a sawn-off shotgun. But instead of consigning old Murph to the knacker's, the long arm of the law swept his bloody remains into the lab and fused raggedy human meat with shiny gun-metal to create a sort of Frankenstein's monster for the next millennium. The carnage that ensued was pant-wettingly gory, as Murphy's lost memories flooded back and he wrought his revenge on his antagonists in an existential sort of way (well, to barely pubescent schoolboys it seemed existential).

At the start of each game you were greeted by a digitised sample of Robocop reciting his Prime Directives: "Protect the innocent. Serve the public trust. Uphold the law." And what a moment it was. This was

Wanna play?

In its day, *Robocop* sold for around a tenner, but now you might find a copy at a car boot sale, complete with Spectrum, for a sensible sum. Alternatively, have a butcher's at www.zx.ru/members.tripod.co.uk/cartwright/spectrum/robocop.htm for a downloadable PC version. The game is a doddle to complete, but you'll love it anyway, as you are magically transported to Murphy's ultra-violent, post-apocalyptic world. Bear in mind your Prime Directives: protect the innocent, serve the public trust, uphold the law. So don't go blowing holes in defenceless members of the general public.

the first time your ZX Spectrum had talked in lucid, recognisably human tones. It was an intensely emotional moment; a triumph of the human spirit through what many believed was a dead-in-the-water medium. Some of you might even remember fighting back the tears, as the moment was made all the more poignant by an oddly haunting electronic soundtrack.

However, the game itself didn't manage to be as groundbreaking or exciting as its soundtrack. Most of the levels saw you clumping your way through a 2D environment, simply pointing your gun at the bad guys and taking them down with a squeeze of the trigger. But, nonetheless, for many the Spectrum version of *Robocop* represented a gaming watershed.

Perhaps you realised subconsciously then that this would be the last time the machine you had grown up with, played with, learned with and (ahem) slept with would really impress the pants off you. What more could the Spectrum's 128K do, for God's sake? It was time to move on. **A**

**"Protect the innocent.
Serve the public trust.
Uphold the law."**

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